

BUILDING CAPACITY

USING TEFL AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES AS
DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED
LITERACY TOOLS



EDITED BY
NEGESSIMO M. MUTAKA

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

Other Titles by Publisher

FRANCIS B NYAMNJOH

Stories from Abakwa

Mind Searching

The Disillusioned African

The Convert

Souls Forgotten

DIBUSSI TANDE

No Turning Back. Poems of Freedom 1990-1993

KANGSEN FEKA WAKAI

Fragmented Melodies

NTEMFAC OFEGE

Namondo. Child of the Water Spirit

EMMANUEL FRU DOH

Not Yet Damascus

THOMAS JING

Tale of an African Woman

PETER WUTEH VAKUNTA

Grassfields Stories from Cameroon

BA'BILA MUTIA

Coils of Mortal Flesh

KEHBUMA LANGMIA

Titabet and The Takumbeng

MILTON KRIEGER

Cameroon's Social Democratic Front: Its History and Prospects as an Opposition Political party, 1990-2011

**Building Capacity:
Using TEFL and African
languages
as development-oriented
literacy tools**

Edited by
Ngessimo M. Mutaka



Langaa Research & Publishing CIG

Mankon, Bamenda

Publisher:

Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group

P.O. Box 902 Mankon

Bamenda

North West Province

Cameroon

Langaagrp@gmail.com

www.langaapublisher.com

ISBN:9956-558-08-7

© Ngessimo M. Mutaka 2008

First Published 2008

DISCLAIMER

All views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Langaa RPCIG.

Contents

Preface	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Issues in the teaching of languages as a prop to a development-oriented literacy <i>N. M. Mutaka & L.M. Attia</i>	1
 Part One: on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)	 13
Chapter Two: Revival of classroom activities through exercises <i>N.M. Mutaka</i>	14
Chapter Three: Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language <i>N.M. Mutaka</i>	31
 Part Two: African languages and literacy	 65
Chapter Four: Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects <i>M. Tadadjen</i>	66
Chapter Five: Literacy in cultures of Oral tradition <i>Cathy Davison</i>	82
Chapter Six: Perspectives de revitalisation d'une langue en danger: le cas du Nyemnyem <i>P. Mutaka & L. Voutsas</i>	88
Chapter Seven: Perspectives for the revitalization of an endangered language: the case of Vute-Banyo <i>P. Mutaka, L. Attia, & L. Voutsas</i>	107
Chapter Eight: Vers une production du matériel destiné à l'enseignement des langues maternelles: extraits de Jules Assoumou (2005) <i>J. Assoumou & P. Mutaka</i>	124
Chapter Nine: Overpowering the anti-African values ghost in us: Reflections on the introduction of African languages in the school system <i>P. Mutaka</i>	131
Chapter Ten: Growing seeds of peace in an African war-torn world <i>P. Mutaka & L.M. Attia</i>	152

Appendix: Literacy texts	162
Help from traditional medicine <i>P. Mutaka, L. Attia & N. Kimbi</i>	163
Getting involved in the fight against the spread of AIDS: brief comments on excerpts from <i>Wish I had known P. Mutaka</i>	171
La quête d'une eau potable: le cas du village Bafou <i>N.M.T. Hermine</i>	179
How to raise rabbits D.D. Béatrice	181
Projet pour l'élevage des poules pondeuses <i>L. Voutsas</i>	182
L'industrie d'oeufs & des poussins <i>K. Constantine</i>	185
La culture des champignons <i>B. Djoupee</i>	186
Goat rearing <i>L. Lenaka</i>	188
Fish farming ("pisciculture") <i>L. Lenaka</i>	190
Bee keeping or apiculture <i>L. Lenaka</i>	192

Preface

When Philip Mutaka asked me to write a preface to this book, I must confess that I was at first reluctant because it is a book on literacy, and I felt that I may not be the right person to write such a preface as I have not specifically published materials on functional literacy. However, as he explained to me the main reason why he believed I was his perfect choice to write such a preface, I felt flattered as I realized that my academic life is somehow the crystallization of what Mutaka hopes linguists should accomplish in terms of propelling the communities they work with into valuing their languages and cultures.

It is true that, in my case, I have pursued this objective through a different route. I started my academic career in the 1970's at the University of Lubumbashi, DRC, where I trained a number of linguists and collaborated with African colleagues. Some of these have now become authorities in their field in various African countries. I think of such people as Vincent Musamba Chanda of the University of Zambia, Kabengele Munanga of the University of São Paulo, Brazil, Daniel Mutombo Huta Mukana of the University of Mbuji-Mayi, DRC, Nkiko Munya Rugero of the University of Lubumbashi, DRC, Vatomene Kukanda of the Institute of National Languages in Luanda, Angola, Salikoko S. Mufwene of the University of Chicago, etc. I then went to India where, among other things, I started the African Diaspora in Asia (TADIA) which is an international academic network of which I am presently the coordinator since 2003. My interest for the native cultures of Latin America has led me to Brazil where, besides being a full professor at the Federal University of Rondônia, I have been the coordinator of a research project called Arawakan Languages of Rio Negro, an adviser to the Indigenous Linguistics Sector in Brasília, Director of the Centre of Amazonian Linguistic Research, Director of Nucleus of Amerindian Languages Studies at the Federal University of Santa Catarina and I am intimately involved with TADIAM Society (Society for Research, Culture, Education and Development of the African Diaspora in Amazonia). I have recently renewed with my first love of Bantuisms in Portuguese and Spanish spoken in Latin America that I started with Professor Luis Beltrán (of Universidad de Alcalá and UNESCO Chair on Afro-Ibero-American Studies, Spain) in Lubumbashi in the 1970s. We indeed noticed that remnants of Bantu languages can still be identified in these languages. Luis Beltrán and I have thus recently initiated a big project on Bantuisms, and naturally, we thought of soliciting some of our past collaborators in the DRC. I have been nicely surprised to find a lot of them and learn that they have fared very well as researchers and authorities in their fields in their respective countries.

Now, if one looks at the number of students these researchers have trained, one immediately realizes that we can form a network of researchers that can influence the future of Africa and other continents. This is why Mutaka has asked me to write this preface, notably, in hammering into us the importance of not doing linguistics only for its own sake, but to also look at the needs of the people we work with and propose them functional literacy as a way to help them find their way through the consequences of globalization which, if not adequately handled, may prove detrimental to the African languages and cultures. It is important that, despite the globalization phenomenon and with the help of the technology of information and communication, the positive aspects of African cultures and their languages be maintained and revived, and if they cannot, that they be archived properly as they constitute an intangible heritage to mankind as has been stressed by UNESCO.

Among the numerous proposals in this book is the necessity for Africans, and I would add, for the communities of Asia and Latin America, to re-think the contents of their language courses and assign them an objective which aims at the integral development of their communities. It is indeed imperative that these courses reflect clear objectives of seeking social, cultural, and economic developments that harmonize with African, Asian, and Latin American values that are deep rooted in their respective various cultures.

To any researcher genuinely concerned with helping the local African communities develop, this book is a necessity in that it clearly defines the challenges that the educational system must meet in order to adequately reform its programs and build a bridge between school and the communities with respect to their daily cultural, social, and economic activities.

Jean-Pierre Angenot

Professor of Linguistics,

Federal University of Rondônia, Porto Velho, Brazil.

Introduction: Issues in the teaching of languages as a prop to a development-oriented literacy

NGESSIMO M. MUTAKA & LILIAN M. ATTIA

As a way of introducing this paper and the present volume, we wish to point out that the title of the volume, “Building capacity: using TEFL and African languages as development-oriented literacy tools” is the unifying theme that runs throughout the different papers that have been selected to make it up. Two papers are on TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and the other papers expose the vision of using African languages as a literacy tool. This paper seeks to make explicit the types of actions we wish the various participants in the language teaching profession to undertake as a consequence of reading this book. The paper is organized as follows. §1 dwells on the place of English as well as other international languages and African languages in the education system; §2 elaborates on the insights from TEFL to help African languages reach their development-oriented literacy goals; §3 exposes the necessity of molding TEFL and other international languages into a development-oriented literacy package; §4 introduces further papers that expose a wider vision of a development-oriented literacy such as the necessity of promoting a culture of peace among Africans, and also samples of papers that can be directly used in classrooms as reading materials but also that can be readily translated in various mother tongues as they would prove useful to the local populations.

The place of English (and other international languages) and African languages in the education system

As is well-known, most teaching systems in Africa are a perpetuation of the education system inherited from colonial powers. This can be seen for example in the types of courses taught in schools. Language classes typically refer to the languages of the “civilized” world, that is, English, French, German, and Spanish, which are the languages of the former colonial masters. When someone is referred to as an intellectual, this often means that he got his formal education in such a language, and most probably, it may mean that he can handle one or two of such languages very well. Conspicuously lacking from this picture of languages taught as school subjects are African languages. Swahili is one of the rare languages that feature in the curriculum of certain schools, mostly of those in Eastern Africa. However, recently, more and more voices are calling for a revalorization of our African languages. A conference was for example held in South Africa calling for the use of African languages as a tool of instruction just like English or French (Szanton 2005). The question now is: would most governments adhere to the idea of spending money to initiate programs of imparting knowledge through African languages in addition to the official languages that are used for that purpose? Most importantly, would parents who have adopted the international languages such as English and French as their

own accept that their children be imparted their education in languages that they cannot use outside their territories?

Whatever opinion we might have about this topic, it is a fact that, as Africans, we cannot function without the use of international languages such as English or French. It is also a fact that our African languages are part of our inheritance. We cannot deny them. We do not want to feel uprooted by forgetting them or assigning them a permanent secondary role in our daily activities. These languages have their special places in our lives, in our daily interactions, mostly outside the schools and offices. In rural areas, they still predominate as the main means of communication between people.

One ineluctable conclusion that looks the most plausible in handling this dichotomy between international languages and African languages as school subjects in our education system is the adoption of what Professor Maurice Tadadjeu calls “a trilingual identity,” that is, as Africans, we are called upon to learn our African language as well as two more languages, one of which is necessarily an international language such as English or French.

Another compelling conclusion is that African languages do not have to be taught for their own sake. They do not have to replace the international languages. It is crucial that the teaching of those languages be motivated by a loftier purpose, notably in helping the majority of Africans boost their economic as well as their cultural development as has been echoed for example in the 23rd WALIS conference held in Buea, Cameroon, in August 2002. The use of African languages for a development-oriented purpose is best known in the concept of literacy. Put differently, whereas international languages will continue to play their role in the various domains where they are used, African languages can play their best role as a development-oriented tool in literacy. As is proposed by a farmer in a paper by Maurice Tadadjeu in this volume, it is imperative that useful flyers that teach how to increase the agricultural yield of certain products be available in both French (and English) and the local African language that the peasants use in their daily activities.

The various papers that have been selected to make up this collection essentially stress the above two conclusions. The papers on TEFL (Teaching English as a foreign language), that is, “Practical Suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language” and “revival of classroom activities through exercises” basically suggest ways to better teach English as a school subject. Their inclusion in this volume has been impelled by two reasons. First, it was our aim to invite teachers of African languages to read these papers to be aware of the strategies used for teaching English as a foreign language that have succeeded to make English such a prestigious international language. As is stressed for every type of lesson, there are aims that have to be clearly stated and there are various techniques that are employed to reach these aims. Teaching African languages in the light of clearly specified aims will certainly help teachers of African languages better reach their goal within the frame of a development-oriented literacy curriculum. Secondly, it was our aim to invite the various teachers of English to improve their techniques of teaching English as we believe that language teachers occupy a precious position in society to potentially influence the mentality of people through the types of texts that they study or discuss in their language

classes. We will further elaborate on these two reasons in the third section of this paper.¹

Insights from TEFL to help African languages reach their development-oriented literacy goals

Before dealing with the means of reaching the development literacy goals that could be assigned as a function of the African languages, the definition of the term “development” we have in mind is in order here.

When we talk about “development,” we usually think about economic development. This is due to the fact that, as an aftermath of western colonialism and the phenomenon of globalization, money has become the most visible value to determine, sometimes wrongly, whether an individual or a group of individuals are developed or not. Development in this sense is dependent on the GNP (Gross National Product) of a country. People will feel more developed if they have the impression that they are earning more money and that they can fulfill more and more of their economic needs like buying iron sheets for their houses, a bicycle, a car, etc. Any literacy program must therefore necessarily take the economic development of the population into account. But we know that economic development is only one side of a multifaceted coin. The following are a few of other sorts of development needs this book will take into account: (a) cultural development, that is, for the individual or a group of individuals to become aware of the cultural richness of their own community and actively participate in its maintenance and growth; (b) social development in the sense that an individual or a group of individuals are able to react as “civilized” people, not giving way to their “primitive” urges for example by fighting physically when provoked by their neighbors; (c) health-awareness development needs, for example, being aware of the necessity of fighting the spread of AIDS, knowing first-aid treatment in case of an accident, learning traditional treatment of one’s cultural community for certain diseases, etc. In what follows, these various types of development form the background of a literacy program for which needs or literacy goals can be identified and implemented.

Most probably, the first reaction of an African language teacher would be whether the TEFL suggestions proposed in the following two papers would be applicable to adult education or not. Our wish is that any African language teachers be able to skim through these papers as we hope that they will give them ideas on the way they could improve their own lessons, whether they deal with adults or children. Most probably, they will realize that they already use some of the strategies suggested, and that there are new strategies that they might want to add to the batteries of their own strategies they use for teaching the African languages. What we would like to suggest now is a number of specific proposals that could help the teachers integrate more development-oriented goals into their language lessons.

Our first proposal concerns the use of texts. As a teacher, one might be obliged by the school authorities to use a specific manual that contains texts that he is obliged to teach. As will be read in “Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign Language,” there is a step in the way to teach a reading

passage that is identified as: Further development. In this step, this is what is suggested:

- The teacher can ask the pupils to imagine a different ending to the story.
- Facts in the text can also be changed and the pupils imagine how the story evolves. As we see, the chosen themes resemble those of the lesson so as to allow a re-utilization of the notions already learned. The themes chosen later differ from those of the beginning. They must present a direct interest for the pupils.

This is a powerful suggestion which, if put in practice, can be revolutionizing our ways of teaching languages. This gives the opportunity to the teacher to introduce new ideas that are not necessarily in the current official texts but which are very useful for the mental development of his students. The question is: what best ideas could then the teacher introduce?

Our own suggestion is that the teacher who is aware of the current problems that his students face will be able to suggest ideas that are related to these problems. One point in case is for example the problem of AIDS. There is this book, "Wish I had known" edited by Mutaka and Bolima (2004) and that contains several suggestions as to the way to fight the spread of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa. If the teacher is convinced that he and his students should contribute to this fight against the spread of AIDS, he will certainly find ways to make students talk about it by suggesting ideas related to that theme and that are already in the book. The language teacher occupies a privileged position in influencing his students because he can make them think, talk, and write about his development-oriented concerns such as the prevention of AIDS. He is and should be a key element to prove the veracity of this observation:

Education is a proven means to prevent HIV/AIDS. It has been proved to provide protection against HIV infection... It can equip children and youth to make healthy decisions concerning their own lives, bring about long-term healthy behaviors, and give people the opportunity for economic independence and hope. It is among the most powerful tools for reducing girls' vulnerability. Girls' education can go far in slowing and reversing the spread of HIV by contributing to female economic independence, delayed marriage, family planning, and work outside home (World Bank 2002:xvii).

Notice also another suggestion from "Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language" that talks about the teaching of a novel. The passage is the following:

- As for the novel, some passages will be sufficient.
- The teacher may also use J. Lutoslawska's following experiment:
 1. Give books geared to the pupils' level.
 2. Tell them to jot down the difficult words. They look them up in a dictionary or ask the teacher.
 3. The teacher asks pupils to explain random passages from the book (say, after a month). Eventually, he asks general questions about the book (Lutoslawska 1975: 196)

Again, this is a strategy that offers some leeway for the teacher to include books that are not necessarily in the official program but which are useful for the students. My own proposal is that the teacher could ask students to read some novels or texts he knows will interest them and will help them tune their mentality to the present times. Students do not have to read the whole book. They can be asked to read a single chapter from the book. Take the case of this book entitled “The Fruit of Love” that the author wrote in a bid to fight successfully against AIDS. But it is a book about love in which the taboo topic concerning sexual relations is thoroughly discussed. We are fully aware that prudishness would prevent a teacher from discussing the contents of such a novel in a classroom precisely because sex is a taboo topic. But the teacher can ask students to read only the first chapter entitled “sex and self-esteem.” This is a chapter that explores two basic ideas: the necessity of re-discovering one’s partner as a gift from God and the necessity of promoting the self-esteem of one’s partner. It is a chapter that essentially teaches how to be better husband and wife and promote a stable loving relationship between couples. Most probably students will surely read the rest of the book because it is very interesting and will thus be better sensitized about the necessity of taking precautions to protect oneself against AIDS. The teacher’s action will have been to encourage students to educate themselves in a topic that serves their own interests.

Much more generally, students should be given the opportunity of developing their reading skills, be made to enjoy reading as a hobby, or looking for specific information in various types of pieces of writing. In fact, one might wonder whether the language teachers are not the primary culprits for the accusation that “Blacks do not read” as is stated in a paper published by the African Publishing Review (2002:13). The exact title of the paper is “Blacks do not read” and it is a paper which underscores the fact that reading is not a cultural feature of the African people. The observation is unfortunately true: few people read books. One might argue that Africans do not read because they do not find interesting material to read about. It is therefore a challenge for language teachers to find or create material that the students will be genuinely interested to read. If the reader knows that he or she can benefit from it, he will read it. To corroborate this, we just want to report two observations Mutaka received from two friends of his about the reading of *the Fruit of love* by Philip Mutaka. One of them said that, in their 15 years of marriage, it is the only book that he ever saw his wife very much interested in reading, as she would sleep late while reading it. The other one, a married woman, said that her eyes had become red because, as she first got it, she felt unable to put it aside. She just enjoyed reading it until late at night.

Another suggestion from “Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language” is the practice of dialogues. Of particular interest for language teachers would be the third step and some of the points suggested for that step. Here is a quotation from the paper:

The third step, i.e., using the dialogue as a departure point for free expression, is very important. The pupils should be able to use the new structures and the new words in a much more personal way to prove

that they have mastered them. This phase can be exploited in the following way:

1. The pupils begin to alter the dialogue to make it conform to the reality around
2. The teacher can ask the pupils to add some more exchanges that would be a logical continuation of the dialogue.
3. The students may paraphrase the lines of the dialogue.
4. The teacher can outline a situation similar to the one of the dialogue and have pupils write it as a dialogue.
5. The dialogue can be used to stimulate free conversation among pupils.
6. The pupils can be asked to summarize it in prose.

One way of exploiting this use of dialogues is for the teacher to bring realistic situations in the classroom and have students perform them. This gives him a further opportunity of letting his pupils role-play situations that reflect their genuine concerns and that could be chosen from topics he believes to be development-oriented needs. More elaborate suggestions about the use of role-plays, problem-solving activities, and lecturettes can be found in “revival of classroom activities through exercises” that we strongly recommend to language teachers.

As for the writing skills, the following proposal from “Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language” may be used to further promote topics that are development-oriented.

- Programmed composition:
 1. Pupils and teacher prepare the ideas in the classroom.
 2. Pupils do the homework at home. The teacher should tell the pupils to limit the number of words they will use and thus train them to write as many ideas as possible in a short text.
- The pupils write a free composition. After ending it, the teacher asks them to keep it. After they have seen a number of new structures in the classroom, the teacher tells the pupils to re-read their homework and correct it. After five or six such corrections, the pupils hand it back preferably with the corrected home works.

One complaint that an African language teacher will probably have is the lack of appropriate material. Programmed composition and free composition suggested in the above quotation give the opportunity to the teacher to prepare his own material that would be adapted to his pupils’ level. For the programmed composition, the teacher can thus choose a topic that will be discussed in class and then ask students to write on it as a homework. One would be amazed about the pieces of writing that students can produce if they are genuinely interested. We wish to give the examples of the several squibs in sociolinguistics that have been published in Mutaka & Chumbow (2001) or the interesting texts on AIDS prevention by Yebga Suzy, Adam Mahamat, Nga Eliane, Djoupee Bertille, Patrick Yemene, Peh Jeanne, and Esamba Michèle that are published in “Wish I had known” by Mutaka and Bolima, eds. (2004). These were homeworks the

ideas of which were briefly discussed in the sociolinguistics class and the instructor encouraged the students to write them up.

This is an opportunity to remind language teachers that they have to develop in students the skill of writing, not just writing to please the teacher or for obtaining marks, but writing for a purpose. Students will take pride in what they are writing about if they know that they will benefit from it or that society will benefit from it. It should be an opportunity for them to do research, contact the representatives of the community who might have the correct information, and for those who have access to internet, to use it for any relevant information. In so developing the writing skills in students, hopefully some of them will pursue their work and produce publishable material or the kind of needed material that can be used in a development-oriented type of literacy program. Besides, language teachers should also act as researchers in that, as they keep collecting useful data that is produced by their own students, they should endeavor to organize it, eventually write it up, or at least put it in a form that other researchers could have access to.

Molding TEFL and other international languages into a development-oriented literacy package

Notice that every suggestion that has been proposed above also applies not only to the specific teachers of English as a foreign language, but also to any language teacher working in the African continent, and this includes the teachers of French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Arabic. Something that we should certainly bear in mind as language teachers is that, when we teach a foreign language to Africans, our aim is not to bring our students to start acting, in every way, like the speakers of the language we are teaching them. In teaching these foreign languages, we simply also want to expose the students to different cultures as a way of opening up their horizons in understanding people who might be different from them.

Since we all know that language is the vehicle of culture, the question now is: what specific culture are we called upon to convey through the teaching of languages? Another way of putting this question: why do we have to teach foreign languages to Africans, since, by so doing, we will be teaching them a foreign culture? We believe one plausible answer is that, learning a foreign language helps people better communicate with the speakers of such a language and, most importantly, it helps people avail themselves of a supplementary tool to enhance its own development. As language teachers, it behooves us to teach material that can really enhance the development goals of our students.

It is true that, for a long time, we have been given a program to cover in order to reach the aims set by the school authorities or the national programmes. It is also true that we have been given specific manuals, when they exist, that we must use for teaching these languages. The question now is: have these manuals always helped our students attain the types of development-oriented goals we would really wish them to reach? Don't we find it odd that, as Africans, people be treated pejoratively as "ces anglos-là" by the francophones when referring to speakers of English or as "frogs" by the anglophone speakers when referring to francophones in a country like Cameroon? And yet, we are all Africans, maybe

with the same common ancestors, with the same economic and social problems. What we would expect from learning foreign languages is not a means to divide us, but to help us solve our numerous problems, including conflicts that often arise out of misunderstanding between people through the use of languages.

As said in the previous section, the reading of “Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language” gives us the opportunity of introducing material that is not necessarily in the official programs but which is fully acceptable as meeting the aims of our various programs, notably, the idea of giving different endings to stories, changing the characters or certain facts in a story to make it conform to our realities, developing writing skills in students by having them write on something that would be useful to them, using dialogues as a departure point for free expression.

Because language teachers are in a privileged position to make students speak and write about themselves to exercise their language skills, they have a golden opportunity of making their students re-discover their traditional lore that they can now be using in their language classes. We think particularly of the so-called oral literature in their native languages that includes legends, myths, proverbs, catchy sayings, lullabies that they could help collect and translate into the foreign languages as a way of developing their writing skills. We also think about inciting students to write about the cultural events of other cultures, not only of the culture of the foreign language that they are learning, but of the cultures of their neighbors or any other interesting culture they might come across and which is likely to help them understand better other cultures as a way of sowing the seeds of mutual understanding between people and a way of avoiding conflicts that often arise from a misunderstanding among different cultures.

An outline we have in mind and which is inspired by the BASAL (Basic Standardization of All African Languages) project of Maurice Tadadjeu (2000) would be the one proposed by Mutaka and Chia (2001); it is the following.

We believe language teachers could think about their language classes as literacy classes. When referring particularly to the adults, one is indeed dealing with students who want to learn a new language but who do have a rich background in their own languages. Whereas the traditional literacy class teacher teaches his students to read and write in his own African language, the foreign language teacher teaches his students to hear, speak, read, and write most of the things he already knows but in a foreign language. In other words, for both the literacy class teacher and the foreign language teacher, the initial data out of which they develop the various respective language skills is the same, that is, the knowledge that the student already possesses. The additional material that the language classes bring in the teaching context is the choice and the organization of that material. The innovation that this paper and this whole book is trying to bring in the language classes is the fact that this material should henceforth be development-oriented where this development encompasses economic, cultural, social development as well as health-awareness development as has been specified earlier in this paper.

This book is thus an appeal to language teachers of any language working in the African continent to do the homeworks proposed in Mutaka and

Chia (2001:272) in a bid to help Africa take the right course to its own development. As they write,

People should be provided with literature in their languages that would allow them to better take care of themselves, in terms of food production, health improvement, etc. This would be achieved by encouraging the translation or summary of special literature on such topics as:

- Bee farming
- Tree planting as a social activity in the X area
- Cattle rearing in the communities of northern Cameroon
- Egg production: how to improve it
- Fighting AIDS and venereal diseases as in Mutaka (2000)
- Environmental studies dealing with subjects such as: how to maintain forest, how to obtain clean water, environmental disruption.
- Fertilizers
- Diarrhea treatment
- Disease names in language X.

Similar themes for a literacy program that language teachers could help emulate in their students are the following:

- Food variation to fight against Kwashiorkor
- Necessity of cooperatives in organizing local farmers for selling their products
- Useful tales, proverbs, lullabies
- Useful advice for the use of contraceptives and fight against the spread of AIDS
- How to fight tooth decay, epilepsy and other diseases with traditional medicine
- Possibility of attracting tourists through the organization of festivals. (Mutaka 2002:76)

We would like to end this section by pointing out two observations by Tadadjeu (2003, this volume) and Tadadjeu & Chiatoh (2002) about the use of African languages in local development and in satellite communications.

First, in the paper entitled “Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects”, the author makes the following observation:

Although S.J. could now read Yémba, he did not seem enthusiastic with the idea that he would have to face beekeeping lessons in written Yémba. [...] In fact, the idea of teaching them in Yémba was to make sure that the French language did not obstruct the acquisition of beekeeping know-how, since most Yémba adults either have a poor control of French, or have no knowledge of it. S.J. was very pleased to hear this. The ideal thing, he said, would be for Albert to eventually produce a bilingual (Yémba-French) beekeeping manual, just like the school primer he had read.

This is a real strong message to language teachers as well as to literacy class teachers. The point it underscores is that language learners will find it more

useful if we can use both foreign languages and our African languages to produce development-oriented materials such as this manual on beekeeping.

The second observation is about the use of satellite communication as a tool that can be used to hasten the socio-economic development of Africa as argued in Tadjadjeu and Chiatoh (2002). One proposal is that radio community stations will be used to collect and process information both from the local community and from satellite installations, and translate this information into appropriate mediums in order to re-transmit it. This is certainly a great idea if it can be implemented. Because local communities would be solicited to collect the information, this would constitute a golden opportunity for language teachers to propose the best results of their work dealing with development-oriented topics to these community radio stations and it would be a further incentive for the students to produce high quality work related to development issues such as health, education, the environment, food security, and conflict resolution as also pointed out in this paper.

Implementing a development-oriented literacy vision

Recently, there has been much talk about the need to fight poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. A number of developing countries have now access to a special fund, the HIPC (Highly indebted poor countries) funds that the World Bank has created to alleviate the impact of poverty among the populations of these countries. It is true that, from an economic point of view, a country needs heavy financial investments for its development. What is equally true is that, to really develop, the people have to acquire some sort of mental development. That is, they must be educated in order to use judiciously the new material wealth that is put at their disposal. They must be able to continue finding ways to improve their economy, and not squander the money they obtain on irrelevant products. In fact, lack of education would push people for example who do not need luxurious cars to buy them just because they want to feel rich. One actual example that illustrates what lack of education may lead to is provided by what once happened in Butembo, a city in eastern DRC. There was a time that peasants in the area of Butembo came into money because of high prices of coffee. Most of them spent it on drinks, and some were even seen washing their hands with drinks just to show they had a lot of money.

In order to combat poverty, it is crucial that people be therefore educated, preferably in their own languages. That is why a multisectoral program aiming at fighting poverty in a region has to go hand in hand with a development-oriented literacy program. Our selection of the papers that are published in this volume has been motivated by the need to give a jump-start to current educational programs that seek to ameliorate the living conditions of local populations.

Thus, the papers by Mutaka on TEFL are meant to (a) stimulate language teachers to improve their teaching and also to tune it much more to the needs of their students as regards their genuine holistic development, (b) to encourage teachers of African languages to draw inspiration from the teaching of English as a foreign language in order to improve the teaching of these languages, (c) to sensitize language teachers on the importance of their job in

that, through the topics they teach in class, they can better influence their students into making them better development agents. Maurice Tadadjeu's paper elaborates on the importance of using African languages for enhancing local development. Cathy Davison's paper entitled "Literacy in Cultures of Oral Tradition" looks at the influences of a primarily oral society on literacy learning and teaching, the range of opinion surrounding the literacy-orality debate, and the effects that such considerations could bring to bear on the literacy classroom. The two papers on the revitalization of endangered languages discuss general strategies for revitalizing African languages with exemplifications on Vute-Banyo and Nyemnyem, two Cameroonian endangered languages. Assoumou and Mutaka's paper entitled "Vers une production du matériel destiné à l'enseignement des langues maternelles : extraits de Jules Assoumou (2005)" primarily suggests guidelines for the production of materials destined for the teaching of African languages. Mutaka's paper entitled "Overpowering the anti-African values ghost in us: Reflections on the introduction of African languages in the school system" provides useful suggestions such as the necessity of emphasizing the oral skills in the teaching of African languages as they are being introduced in the school system. The paper on growing a culture of peace by Mutaka and Attia addresses the problem of perpetual conflicts in the African continent and it underscores the necessity of growing seeds of peace in order to create the ideal context of the development of people in this continent.

In the appendix, we have included texts that can be exploited in different ways: these are texts that can be translated in African languages and that students can be encouraged to discuss with people in their area. Our hope is that, if the peasants can interact with their own children who take formal classes and who can discuss such topics with them, they are more likely to become genuinely interested and be motivated to get involved in literacy classes. These texts are meant to be a bridge between formal texts taught in classrooms and literacy texts that can raise the genuine interests of the local populations in that they address their immediate needs. We also hope that students will be able to identify other topics that are of interest to these local populations, that they will write on them and eventually publish the resulting articles in their local newspapers if there are any, or use them in their local community radios for the purpose of enhancing the development of these populations. Among the possible topics, we wish students to address those concerning economic development, but also such issues as health, education, the environment, food security, and conflict resolution.

Using both the official languages such as English and French at school and translating the material in local languages in order to use it in literacy classes would be a way of implementing a development-oriented literacy vision encapsulated in Maurice Tadadjeu's statement that "it is high time to show to the world that it is now possible to use 2000 African languages as means of instruction, as is being implemented by the BASAL (Basic Standardization of All African Languages) project" (Tadadjeu, personal communication).

Notes:

¹ These goals have been described as “development needs” in Mutaka 2002. This paragraph is actually an excerpt from that paper

References

- African Publishing Review (2002) ‘Blacks do not read’ in *African Publishing Review*, APNET vol 11:2.
- Mutaka, M. N. (2002) ‘On the identification and implementation of a literacy program in the Nande area (DRC)’ *African Journal of Applied Linguistics* 3: 61-76.
- (2003) Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language. (This volume).
- (2003) Revival of classroom activities through exercises. (This volume).
- Mutaka, Philip (2001) *The Fruit of Love*, Yaounde: Editions SHERPA.
- Mutaka, P. & F. Bolima (eds) (2004) *Wish I had known*, Yaounde: Editions SHERPA.
- Mutaka, M. Ngessimo & Emmanuel Chia (2000) ‘Issues to investigate in Cameroonian linguistics’ in *Research Mate in African Linguistics: Focus on Cameroon*, Mutaka and Chumbow (eds.), Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Szanton, David (2005) ‘The intellectualisation of African languages: report of a workshop sponsored by PRAESA and the Ford Foundation’ in Alexander, N. (ed.) *The intellectualisation of African languages, the African Academy of Languages and the implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa*, Cape Town: PRAESA.
- Tadadjeu, Maurice (2000) ‘Basic standardization of unwritten African languages’ in *Research Mate in African Linguistics: Focus on Cameroon*, Mutaka and Chumbow (eds.), Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.
- Tadadjeu, Maurice (2003) ‘Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects’. (This volume).
- Tadadjeu, Maurice & Blasius Chiatoh (2002) ‘The challenge of satellite communication in African languages’. *African Journal of Applied Linguistics*, No. 3, pp. 1-15.
- World Bank (2002) *Education and HIV/AIDS, a window of hope*, Washington, D.C.

Part One
on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

Revival of Classroom Activities through Exercises

NGESSIMO MUTAKA

1. Introduction²

Among the causes of the failure for our secondary school pupils to be productive in English, there are some which are beyond teachers' control. The teachers' lack of motivation due to their living conditions, the time and place of the classroom activities and the lack of appropriate teaching materials can be mentioned in this respect. Such problems should be solved by the school authorities and we will not treat them in this paper.

Some other causes can be subjected to the teachers' responsibility. They include wrong interactions in the classroom, some sociolinguistic reasons that explain the reduction of pupils' talk and the nature of the classroom activities. They will form the subject matter of this paper. I will try to propose a number of classroom activities to alleviate their bad effects.³ But before tackling those exercises, I would like to pose the problems more clearly.

As we often observe, the interactions in the classroom are mostly between teacher and pupils and not pupils and pupils. This results in the monopolization of talk by the teacher. And yet, the pupils are the ones who need to talk. As is often said about the three Ps (i.e. presentation of the material, practice with the material, production of the material by the pupils), the presentation of the new material should only take one fifth of the time allocated to its teaching in the classroom. Pupils are the ones to practice and produce the new material under the passive control of the teacher and should therefore talk during the remaining four fifths of the teaching time.

Among the sociolinguistics reasons, we may note the following: the teacher is alone whereas the pupils are numerous; all the pupils cannot speak to the teacher despite his good will in trying to involve the whole class.

The teacher is generally older than his pupils and is considered to possess knowledge to be imparted to pupils. In the presence of an older person, the young are supposed to keep silent, obedient and respectful towards him. Although they have got some knowledge, they are supposed to actively listen to the teacher. They are not teachers but learners. A pupil who dared to openly teach his peers in a traditional classroom would be scorned by everybody.

Most of the questions the teacher puts have no communicative purpose. He knows the answer to those questions. This creates a problem for the pupils because they have to adapt their reasoning in a foreign language to the teacher's precise idea. Thus, to the question-tag: "you are Marie, aren't you?", the pupil cannot answer: "who told you?" He must answer either by "yes, I am" or by "no, I am not."

The teacher's obsession with discipline makes him discourage any pupil who feels the need to speak without his permission. The pupils are thus constantly frustrated because they cannot freely express their feelings.

We should also note some socio-cultural specificities that teachers do not often take into account. Thus, boys are often reluctant to answer female teachers' or girls' questions because of a cultural complex of superiority they have over women. Most people are also reluctant to talk in large groups because each of them expects the other to speak. Some rarely speak in the classroom because they abhor being laughed at for not mastering the English language. Some others prefer to keep silent because they never want to show off in a large group. It would be worthwhile to know how pupils belonging to different ethnic groups react in certain specific situations. We would thus know when they are likely to be talkative.

The introversion or extroversion of pupils is also a criterion that could be exploited. Some pupils can easily be active because they seek the teacher's favour. Some are timid and some others expansive.

The nature of classroom activities is also a serious impediment to the pupils' productive oral skills. Only linguistic competence is often emphasized through the teaching of grammar: the communication competence is neglected. The final goal of teaching English as a foreign language or as an international language is thus rarely achieved.

What could then be the incentives to make classroom activities more lively and productive? I believe that we should still rely on the kinds of exercises we have often done in the classroom. I also believe that a number of exercises of a different nature should be instilled into those traditional exercises. They will help the teacher deal much better with the communicative competence.

We should for instance re-think the re-arrangement of the classroom. Instead of having all the desks turned towards the teacher, pupils could sit in small groups around desks. They would thus constitute groups of peers from which the need to talk more naturally could be felt. The teacher would simply play his role of helper and supervisor and not the focus of all classroom activities.

Team work should be encouraged as much as possible. Pupils are likely to have less inhibitions about speaking when they talk to their classmates without the all-pervasive presence of the teacher. It is true that they will be making a lot of mistakes. Shouldn't we feel that if the message can get across despite those mistakes it would be extraordinary? As it has been pointed out above, many pupils are reluctant to speak because of the fear of being laughed at for not mastering the language. Working in groups would also train pupils not only to become leaders of their groups but also to be more obedient and more respectful towards their peers.

The use of games could also be a best incentive as it meets with the young people's natural tendency to amuse themselves, to relax, to perform challenging activities. In this paper, I will propose a number of language games that can help teach vocabulary and grammatical items.

Practice of English through situations should also be a useful means to increase pupils' productive oral skills. Such situations would help solve the problem of teaching English for communicative purposes. Meaningful drills, conversations, dialogues, community-oriented activities and problem-solving activities would thus be taught for this purpose.

In the present paper, I would like to expand on those different incentives as mirrored mainly in lessons of grammar, reading, and oral skill activities, and writing skills.

2. Grammar

2.0 Apart from the usual grammar activities, the teacher could introduce in his exercises mechanical drills, meaningful drills, short dialogues, practice situations and games. If possible, the meaningful drills should always occur after the mechanical drills. In fact, for the users of mechanical drills, they are considered to be useful for habit-formation. They are an application of a Skinnerian view on language that holds that learners best learn a language by constantly producing the right responses to a given stimulus. The meaningful drills are already somewhat communicative in that the learner has to use his intelligence before giving the answer.

2.1 Mechanical drills

The mechanical drills include repetition drills, correlative drills, substitution drills and transformation drills.⁴

One simple way to exploit any of those drills is that

1. The teacher leaves some of the model sentences he used for the presentation of a grammatical item on the blackboard.
2. He manipulates some of those sentences into repetition, correlative, substitution drills. It might not be necessary to practice one type of a drill for a long time. It should be a matter of seconds. The pupils usually understand very easily what is required of them if clear instructions have been given.

E.g., conditional clauses

If I had money, I would buy a car.

Pupils substitute car by bus, trousers, house, and pen.

Then the teacher suddenly changes into she, he, my uncle.

Then he changes into had had, had obtained, etc.

Another way to exploit those drills is the use of chain drills.

Here are two illustrative examples:

T. I'm going to buy a coat.

P1. You are going to buy a coat and I am going to buy a pen.

P2. You are going to buy a coat, Amani is going to buy a pen and I am going to buy some meat.

As we notice, each pupil must retain what the previous pupils have said in order to correctly produce his response. The second illustrative example is the following:

T. I might eat beans

P1. I might eat beans and rice

P2. I might eat beans and rice and fish

P3 I might eat beans and rice and fish and cassava leaves.

When the sentence becomes too long, the pupils might change certain items or the teacher introduces another structure. Once more, he might simply take verbatim some of the sentences on the blackboard.

2.2 Meaningful drills

1. Use of chain drills

E.g., if-clauses

T If I get money, I will go to Butembo
P1 If you go to Butembo, what will you do?
P2 If I go to Butembo, I will visit my parents.
P3 If you visit your parents how will you feel?
P4 If I visit my parents, I will feel happy
P5 If you feel happy, what will you do?
P6 If I feel happy, I will help my poor friends.

Such a chain drill helps the pupils practice the grammatical structure in a more natural way. The element of surprise is in the answer and the questioner, while taking the end of the sentence, must think about a possible natural question.

2. Completion exercises.

Here the teacher simply says or writes the beginning of a sentence and the pupils complete it in the right way. This could be a good means to practice conjunctions, if clauses, subordinators, infinitives, etc.

E.g., T I feel it my duty to ...
P1 I feel it my duty to study hard
P2 I feel it my duty to help the teacher
P3 I feel it my duty to go to Kadutu in the afternoon
T. There are ...
P1 There are students outside
P2 There are lamps on the table
T There is ...
P1 There is a pen on the table
P2 There is a picture hanging on the wall.

3. Indirect question drill or three-stage drill.

E.g., T Paluku, find out how and when Kaligo became director of the CAP
P1 Kaligo, when did you become director of the CAP?
Kal. I became director of the CAP in 1982
P1. What did you do to become director of the CAP?

- Kal. Well, I wrote many letters to the ISP director. I showed him the different things that could be corrected.
- T P1, answer my question now.
- P1 (P1 gives a complete answer to the question).

The indirect question drills help the pupils put questions and give answers that favor interaction among pupils.

4. Dialogue repetition drills.

- E.g., T This boy always smokes hemp.
- P1 Then he smoked hemp yesterday.
- P2 No, he didn't smoke hemp yesterday.
- P1 Why not?
- P2 He did not find it in the market.
- P1 When did he smoke it then?
- P2 He smoked it two days ago.

Such a dialogue could be a frame for practicing the use of the simple past, the adverbs of frequency, the modals and the negative forms.

Note about the drills.

The repetition drills might be thought as too small an exercise and therefore would not fit the upper classes. We should not forget, however, that the learner does train his memory in retaining the whole information, an exercise which is not always so simple in a foreign language.

It should also be noted that both the mechanical and the meaningful drills lend themselves to an easy application in team work. In case of a large classroom, it is possible to start chain drills with several rows simultaneously. And in a team work, the teacher has to make sure there is a leader in each group who coordinates the exercise. Pupils should take turns in leading their different groups.

2.3 Short dialogues

It is possible to put a given structure in a short dialogue (2 or 3 exchanges) that elicits its use.

E.g., Could have + past participle.

- P1 Oh, I have just stumbled over this stone
- P2 Don't be so hurt! You could have fallen and died instantly
- P1 Fortunately I didn't fall down and die instantly.

The word "stumbled" could be replaced by other words which would entail the substitution of "over this stone" by other phrases. The structure "could have + past participle" would be retained. Eventually,

as pupils practice such a short dialogue, they could be asked to improvise some more exchanges, thus continuing the dialogue into free speech.

2.4 Practice situations.

Given a structural item, pupils try to practice it through a conversation of their own. The teacher must think about the ideal situation to have them practice the use of that grammatical item.

E.g., the use of the modals: can, could, should, might, may, will, etc.

1. T assigns the role of white men to a group of pupils. Among the white men, there are some who neglect the black people because of a rather sad past experience. E.g., colonization, slavery, etc.

T assigns the role of black people to another group of students. The black people very much complain about the white people because of a number of things they should have achieved.

2. Each group or each individual writes down what he thinks about the other group:

e.g., - They should have built tarred roads
They ought not to colonize us
Our parents would have developed without their intervention
Belgium could not become a developed country without the help of DRC
- We should never have left the DRC
The Congolese authorities ought to recall us back
Kabila ought to chase French people from his country
The Congolese might work better or the Congolese will work better when they are supervised by white people

Another situation to practice these modals: in many African countries, all prospective candidates for election say that they will mend the bridge over the river, build schools, improve the roads, etc. Discuss what the people should, could, might, will do or ought to have done

3. Pupils might now work in their own groups. The leader of the group might put such questions as:

What should the white men have done?

What ought they to do?

What will they do in the future?

Instead of simply answering the leaders' questions, the pupils might formulate questions from the answers they built.

E.g.,
P1 Don't you think that they should have built tarred roads?
P2 Should the white men have left the DRC so early?
P3 Don't you think that Germans could also have colonized us?

P4 Do you think that we ought to be colonized by communists instead of being colonized by capitalists?

2.5 Games.

It is possible to practice the use of grammatical items through a number of games.

1. Simple present tense: Use of Kim's game

The teacher shows a picture and tells the pupils to watch it carefully.

Then he hides it and asks the pupils to tell what they remember.

Pupils will produce such sentences as:

There is a cupboard in the corner.

One boy sits on a chair. He wears a shirt and an overcoat.

Next to him there is a girl smiling, etc.

If it is a series of pictures, the pupils might tell the story related by the pictures.

E.g., in the first picture, there is a man who wants to go out. In the second picture, he meets his wife with 2 other women. In the third picture, they are sitting in the living room.

Notice that for such activities, the teacher or the group leader might introduce questions that help the pupils or the members of the group to use the simple present tense.

E.g., Why does he want to go out?

Where does his wife come from?

What do you think they are talking about in the sitting-room?

2. Present perfect tense: use of Hide and seek game.

The teacher or the group leader hides an object. The pupils must try to find where he hid it. They will use such structures.

-Have you hidden it under your desk?

-Have you given it to Mubake?

-Have you thrown it under the desk?

Or -You may have eaten it.

-You may have given it to Kaputo.

This tense can also be practiced in the *Tales of a traveller* activity. The teacher or the group leader chooses two countries on the map. The teacher writes some adverbs of time and frequency on the blackboard that pupils will be using in their utterances. Pupils decide by which means they will travel. Pupils will take turns as commentators. They can come out with such examples:

I will pass the microphone to my friend Bisimwa.

Bisimwa: Now we have just left Douala. It is 7 o'clock. We hope to reach Limbe in two hours. We have already had one flat tyre. Fortunately, we are with a mechanic. Mr. Musole. Mr. Balegamire who is sitting in the front seat next to his wife has just slapped his kid because it is making too much noise.

For such an exercise, the teacher must instruct the pupils to concentrate on the use of the present perfect tense with the use of the adverbs of frequency and time.

3. Modals and auxiliaries. They can be practiced through the game of 20 questions, what can you do with it, an operation.

In the game of 20 questions, the teacher or the group leader announces that he has got an interesting pet. Pupils have to find out what it is by putting such questions.

Can it fly? Has it got four legs? Can it burn? Does it speak? Etc.

Every time a pupil puts a question, if the answer is no, another pupil puts his. A pupil who gets a yes answer is allowed to put other questions.

In the Operation activity, the teacher or the group leader asks the pupils to execute or to describe an operation; e.g., How do you build a house, a chair, a table? How do you cash a check? How do you order from a menu?

4. The continuous forms. They can be practiced in the “what were you doing last night” and “silly stories” games.

In the “what were you doing last night” game, the teacher or the group leader just puts that question. Pupils might answer: I was writing a letter, I was speaking English.

In the “silly stories” game, the teacher or the group leader begins the first half of a sentence and the pupils continue the story. When a pupil hesitates, the teachers re-animates it by beginning other sentences.

E.g., I met a pupil yesterday.

P1 He was going to the classroom.

P2 He was carrying some books.

P3 He was running fast because he was late

P4 All the time he was looking at his watch....

5. If-clauses. They can be practiced in the structures “what would you do” or “what would you have done?”

The teacher asks the pupils to imagine any object their friends might have been or had. One could have been a pen, a beast, a lion, a toad, a chief, a politician, a leper, a bed, an elephant, a tree, etc. One might have money, a serious disease, a hat, etc. In the

team work, pupils just ask their questions of their colleagues, beginning by what would you do if? What would you have done if?

6. Imperatives could be practiced in warm-up exercises, back to back directions and an operation.

In warm-up exercises, the teacher or the group leader gives directions to pupils and they carry out his instructions by doing the right warm-up exercises. When he finishes, another pupil replaces him.

E.g., raise your hands, lower your right arm, squat on your heels. Sit down. Stand up, etc.

In back to back directions, pupils sit in pairs. They use sheets of paper to draw what their partner instructs them to do. Every pupil should first prepare his own drawing before he starts giving instructions to his partner for making a similar drawing. At the end of the exercise, they will thus compare the two drawings and eventually discuss about the wrong directions.

7. Relative pronouns. These can be easily practiced through definitions.

A pupil utters a sentence. He is asked to define several words in his sentence. In their questions, pupils may use where, what, how, when.

- E.g., P1 I saw a lion in the park.
 P2 What is a park?
 P1 A park is a place where lions and other animals live
 P3 What is a lion?
 P1 A lion is an animal which has got a mane.
 P4 What is a mane?

8. Any structure can be practiced in the “add a word or two and chain story” game. In this game, the teacher or the group leader utters a three-word sentence. Each pupil has simply to add one or two words until the sentence becomes odd.

- E.g., T I have a book
 P1 I have an interesting book
 P2 I have an interesting book with funny pictures
 P3 I have a very interesting book with funny pictures
 P4 I have got a very interesting book with funny blue pictures.

3. Reading and Oral Skill Activities.

- 3.0.1. Two kinds of reading activities might be distinguished: the intensive reading and the extensive reading.

3.1. The pupils could best be trained in the extensive reading by applying the formula S Q 3R, i.e. Survey-Questions-Reading-Reciting-Reviewing. As we know, this type of reading would greatly help pupils cope with outside reading materials. The pupils could therefore be asked to survey for instance a novel, a lecture or a paper. They read the title of the article, the place and the time of its publication, the number of pages, the foreword the preface, and the introduction. They are encouraged to put questions themselves, and then find the answers of which will be found in the piece of writing. They will thus read with a purpose. At home they will be encouraged to recite and review what they have already retained. This exercise of reciting and reviewing could even be done in the classroom as lecturettes.

3.2. As for the intensive reading, the use of before-questions and after-questions should be emphasized.

When the teacher uses the before-questions or pre-questions, he should clearly explain those questions to his pupils so that they know what specific answers they should look for in the reading selection.

As we all know, the after-questions are important to test pupils' comprehension and their memory of the ideas of the text. At this stage, the five types of question that can be exploited in the classroom could be recalled. They consist of:

1. Questions the answers to which are easily found in the text. They are yes-no questions, true-false statements and multiple choice questions.
2. Wh-questions. These questions begin by what, where, who, which, when. They are also relatively simple enough because the information is found in the reading passage.
3. Why and how question. For these questions, the information is acquired from the text but there is not a specific passage that contains it.
4. Questions answerable from inference or implication from the reading passage. These can be yes-no questions, why-questions, true-false statements, or multiple choice questions.
5. Questions of which the answers require evaluation or judgment relating the reading selection to additional information or experience of the reader. These questions should help the pupils view the reading passage as a springboard to speak about their own life, their own feelings.

When answering those questions, the teacher should not waste much time with easy questions. Pupils should rather devote their time

on discussing the more difficult questions like numbers 4 and 5 in the above paragraph. I have appreciated very much Bernard Smith's technique (Smith 1976) to have the pupils use cubes on which the letters A,B,C,D and X have been marked. When the teacher puts a question, the pupils show the letter which corresponds to the answer. If most pupils have the same correct answer, they pass to the following question. This greatly reduces the irrelevant talk in the classroom. I fancy that pupils could also be asked to possess five cards on which these letters are written. They would very soon be accustomed to their use and this would heighten their constant activity in the classroom.

The answers to those questions could also be discussed in groups without much intervention of the teacher. Pupils would choose a secretary in each group who would be writing the different answers. In the end, they each draw as many columns as there are groups in the classroom. For each column, he writes the letters of the different answers as dictated by the secretary. If there are wrong sentences, pupils might be asked to justify some of their answers.

Apart from the usual activities related to the exploitation of the text—ending a story, changing some facts in the story and imagining how it evolves, summarizing the story, performing the ideas of a story—the following oral skills could be encouraged as classroom activities and lecturettes. Whenever possible, the teacher would try to see how he could introduce such activities from passages suggested by the reading selection.

3.3. Role-plays. There are three basic parts for a successful role-play: the situation, the roles and the useful expressions.

The situation might be just the one of the text or it might be differently delineated by the teacher. As role-plays offer the best opportunity to practice the different intonation patterns, the teacher should try to foresee scenes that express exasperation, delight, shock, praise, fear, etc. He should also think about situations that mirror the practical daily activities such as ordering a meal in a restaurant, buying an airplane ticket, drawing a check on a bank, trying to enroll one's child in a school, getting children to do some housework after school, etc.

Each pupil should know his role and what is expected of him. Sometimes the roles can be assigned to the different groups in such a way that they do not know exactly the others' strategies for their performance. An example might be in order here.

Suppose a lion has been found dead in a village near a park. The park guards suspect the village people of having killed it. They are to be prosecuted in a court. One group could be the suspected villagers who try to negotiate with lawyers and witnesses how to best defend their case. Another

group would consist of the park guards with their counsels: they would look for the best strategies to incriminate the other group.

The useful expressions should be given to the pupils in advance. Eventually, the role-play material could be given as an assignment the pupils would take home. They would then think about the best ways to introduce those expressions in their speech.

- 3.4. Community-oriented activities. To bridge the gap between the classroom activities and the outside ones, pupils should be encouraged to do certain work for which they must get the information from the community in which they live. They could for instance be given the following assignments:

- find out how the dowry is paid in your culture.
- find out when and how your village was founded;
- find out what customs have stopped since the time of your parents, grandparents;
- find out how a woman makes a pot, fufu (dumpling), etc.
- How can a person become a chief?
- Discuss with an old man / woman, his or her life story.

From such ideas, the teacher could organize lecturettes that would be delivered by pupils. They would have to write down what they have discovered and made to read it in the classroom. Such activities would help pupils resolve their problems of being at a loss when facing outside realities.

- 3.5. Problem-solving activities. The seeds of challenge that are usually contained in such activities make them very interesting. Here are two such problems.

Pupils are required to go camping on an island. On that island, there is neither food nor houses. The pupils have to provide for everything. What are the different items each one should take with him? Pupils should be able to justify each item they choose if asked to. Such an activity could be best done in groups.

The second example is about four boys inhabiting four houses with different colors and possessing cars with the same colors as their houses. The boy A does not have a green house. The boy D possesses a yellow car. Pupils can then be asked to order those boys with their houses and cars.

- 3.6. Lecturettes. As it has been previously said, the pupils should be given more and more opportunities to prepare lecturettes and present them in their groups or to the entire class. In the case where pupils tell such stories in groups, other pupils could be asked to report what their colleagues exposed. This

would push those pupils to be more attentive in the classroom.

As can be noticed, most of those activities are essentially designed to develop pupils' communicative skills. The teacher should be mostly concerned with having the pupils get their meaning across. He should not therefore overcorrect the pupils' mistakes as this can create a certain frustration on their part. However, the teacher could sometimes suggest corrections if a given pupil asks for them. For other errors, he can be writing them on a sheet of paper and build a mini lesson around such mistakes.

4. The writing skill

As we all know, the writing skill is the most difficult of all language skills. Any teacher will have noticed that his pupils always make a great number of mistakes he does not always know how to correct efficiently. Pupils could be prepared to write English by trying their hands first on the controlled compositions, then on the free compositions.

4.1. For the controlled compositions, here are some suggestions the English teacher could add to his usual classroom activities.

4.1.1. Filling in blank spaces. The teacher could best help the pupils practice the writing of some specific structural items by devising an exercise with blank spaces. The pupils would have simply to fill in those items.

E.g., use appropriate time adverb: as soon as, when, until, while

.... he was writing his homework, he found a book on his table.

4.1.2. Completion exercises.

Pupils could for instance be asked to complete a letter of which the beginning and the conclusion have been given in advance. They would only have to add some more ideas conforming thus to the style and the general tone of the letter.

The frame of the ideas can also be given and the pupils merely have to complete the paragraph. In other words, the topic sentence is given and the pupils complete with the supporting sentences and eventually the concluding sentence. E.g. We can identify three causes for the drought in DRC:

----- ; -----; -----.

Although,

However, ...

Moreover,

This technique can be interesting for the use of rejoinders in paragraph writing. Eventually, a complete plan could also be given and the pupils just follow it. Such a plan

could be organized in class so that the pupils know exactly what and how to write their composition.

Another realistic completion exercise is answering questions on a form. In their working careers, pupils will be required to do that very often.

E.g., - name: - age - profession
 - describe in a few lines your school experience

- 4.1.3. Note-taking as answers to certain questions. The teacher writes some questions on the blackboard and explains them to the pupils. He then reads the reading selection and the pupils take notes for the answers to his questions. The teacher might re-read the text twice to allow pupils to correct their notes. Slight changes in the formulation of answers are acceptable. This type of exercise trains the pupils to take personal notes, an exercise they will be regularly doing at the university level. It can also help pupils to take messages from a telephone.

- 4.1.4. Putting the necessary connectives. The teacher puts his questions and the pupils write the answers. Then the pupils are asked to join those sentences with connectives.

E.g., What are the main courses taught in Alfajiri?

 The main courses taught in Alfajiri are: French, English, Latin and Mathematics.

 What kind of section is there in Alfajiri?

 In Alfajiri there is a literary section.

 Joining the sentences: The main courses taught in Alfajiri are French, English, Latin and Mathematics because it is a literary section.

- 4.1.5. Summary writing. The pupils can be asked to sum up a text seen in the classroom in a few lines. They could be encouraged to use the vocabulary of the reading passage.

- 4.1.6. Reordering scrambled sentences. To develop the logical reasoning of the pupils, the teacher could write disorderly the different sentences of a logical text. Such a text could be an experiment. In ordering those sentences, the pupils would have to ponder upon the individual sentences and decide which sentences should come first and which ones should follow, taking into account such cues as first, also, however, although, on the one hand, on the other hand, definitely, finally, etc.

 Pupils could also be asked to rewrite those re-ordered sentences as a description or a report, using the appropriate tenses and connectives.

- 4.1.7. Rephrasing sentences. To train pupils to write topic sentences and supporting sentences, pupils could be asked to rephrase pairs of sentences into generalization and exemplification. They could also express an observation and a conclusion.

E.g.,

1. The writing skill is the most difficult of all the language skills.
2. Pupils usually make an incredible number of mistakes in their free compositions.

Rephrasing: One might assert that the writing skill is the most difficult of all language skills. This can be for instance seen in the incredible number of mistakes our pupils usually make in their free compositions.

- 4.1.8. Imitation of a well-written paragraph. Here is a very good example from C.B. Paulston and M. N. Bruder (1976:212).

Mary was a foolish girl who thought only about beautiful clothes. One morning, she was walking along a road, carrying a basket full of eggs. She was going to the city to sell them and to buy clothes with the money. She was walking in the middle of the road, thinking of the clothes which she was going to buy. Suddenly a big car came around the corner. Mary jumped out of the way, dropped the basket, and all the eggs were broken.

The student is asked to rewrite it beginning with John was a young man”:

“John was a young man who cared mainly about lively parties. One night he was drinking at a party, enjoying an evening full of fun. He was singing to the guests to amuse them and to impress them with his cleverness. He was standing on the chair in the corner, singing of the girl he was going to marry. Suddenly the host came into the room. John jumped off the chair, sprained his ankle, and all the fun was spoiled.”

As the rewritten paragraph shows, the pupil has to ponder about the nature, the function and the use of each item in the original composition. This can help him imitate the style of good writers.

- 4.2. In a free composition, the teacher could tell the pupils to keep the first draft of their composition so that they might correct it several times in the light of the new grammatical structures

and words they see in class. The teacher can eventually supply them with a checklist that would help them focus on the correction of certain mistakes. Here is a checklist that can be useful to advanced pupils. Each teacher can also re-adapt it to the level of his own pupils by listing for instance the common mistakes they usually make.

Rough outline:

- A clear thesis statement that can be supported or proved.
- Three or more useful supporting points.

Rough draft:

- Mechanics give a clean, orderly impression.
- The title shows imagination in phrasing, indicates the subject clearly.
- Logical development of one idea in a paragraph.
- A topic idea that gives the idea of a paragraph.
- A clear controlling idea in the topic sentence
- Supporting statements that focus on the controlling idea
- Clear relationship or transition between sentences.
- Connectives used with precision to show relationship
- Correct punctuation to develop the meaning of sentences
- Good use of parallel structure in series
- Good use of phrases or clauses to modify or to tighten the expression of an idea
- A good conclusion that draws the paragraph together.

In correcting the pupils' compositions, the teacher can simply underline the mistakes so that the pupils might correct themselves. Otherwise, they will be simply interested in their grades and not in the kinds of mistakes they made. The teacher can eventually take the precaution of never recording their grades until they have corrected their compositions. While writing the first draft of their composition, they can be skipping one line to allow an easier correction.

5. Conclusion

As has been emphasized throughout this paper, I believe that we cannot yet do away with the traditional exercises we have been so far practicing in our classrooms. We need however to complete them with more communicative exercises. English would thus really be taught either as a true foreign language to allow pupils to communicate with English native speakers or as an international language to serve as a real lingua franca between people of different nationalities.

We teachers should avail ourselves of the best opportunities to let the pupils speak as much as possible without any sociolinguistics frustrations. We should tend towards the ideal situation of drastically reducing teacher-talk and have our pupils direct their own language class through the practice of the material at their disposal.

Notes:

² This paper was written in 1985 while I was teaching English at ISP/Bukavu, DRC, and it was circulated by the Centre d' Animation Pédagogique. We decided to publish it in this volume as most of the suggestions in it would be relevant for the teaching of African languages as well.

³ In writing this paper, I have tried to sort out among the numerous materials used in ESL and EFL classes what is feasible in our African schools. My source of inspiration consists mostly of the documents mentioned in the References. The exercises that are proposed in this paper should not require much preparation time. C. Paulston and M. Bruder (1976) as well as my participation in a seminar on TEFL in St Ghislain, Belgium (1976) have been of great help. I have observed the application of such techniques in some Belgian schools and have applied some myself, as a teacher, over a number of years of teaching English in secondary schools in Bukavu, DR Congo.

⁴ See more explanations of these drills in the following chapter (cf. Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language, section 4.4).

References

- Dingenen, Michael (1985) 'Teaching techniques for communicative English', Ms. Bukavu: CAP/ISP.
- MacDonald, F. & R. Gordon (1984) *Action Plans. 89 student-centered language activities*, Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.
- Moorwood, H. (ed.) (1975) *Selections from Modern English Teacher*, London: Longman.
- Paulston, C.B. and M.N. Bruder (1976) *Teaching English as a second language. Techniques and procedures*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Richards, J.C. (ed.) (1978) *Understanding second and foreign language learning. Issues and approaches*, Rowley: Newbury House Publishers.
- Robinett, B.W. (1978) *Teaching English to speakers of other languages*, New York: McGrawhill International Book Co.
- Smith, Bernard (1976) 'Meads cubes for instant feedback' in *MET*, London: Longman.
- Widdowson, H.C. (1978) *Teaching language as communication*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Wright, A. et al. (1981) *Games for language learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Practical Suggestions for Teaching English as a Foreign Language

NGESSIMO M. MUTAKA

1. Introduction

In language teaching, motivation has been considered as a stimulating element to quicken the learning of a foreign language. The various devices the teacher of a foreign language uses often determine the degree of this motivation. It is true there is not a particular method that would lead to an automatic learning of a language. It is also true that some of the current methods cannot always be much appreciated because of their low effect to stimulate speech. In this paper, I intend to suggest some strategies for teaching vocabulary, reading, grammar, dictation, dialogues, etc. In writing this paper, I have kept in mind the following facts.

First, I consider that monotony in a lesson is a factor that decreases motivation and leads to boredom. My suggestion of various practical methods aims at offering the teacher of English ready-made devices to vary his teaching techniques and thus render his lessons much more interesting. Secondly, I am mostly concerned with teaching English in the upper forms of secondary school although much of what I write is valid for the inferior degrees. Thirdly, this paper is addressed to schools which cannot afford the use of sophisticated and expensive audio-visual means.

I must also point out that I meant the contents of this paper to be really practical. That is why I have not included citations and philosophical justifications of the methods for fear of rendering it rather theoretical. I have drawn much information from the principles of the SGAV methods as propounded by Belgian methodologists like Professor R. Renard (see his *La Méthodologie SGAV d'Enseignement des Langues*, Didier, Paris 1976), Fries' *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1945, *The Art of TESOL, Parts One and Two*, English Teaching Forum, Washington 1975, R.P. Box's *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, BEC, Kinshasa 1974. Professor Mrs de Vriendt's course of *Méthodologie des Langues*, (Mons 1975-1976, unpublished) has been much valuable. The other works mentioned in the References have also constituted a source of my documentation for this paper.

In the present paper, I shall, at times, discourage the use of certain techniques which do not favor pupils' learning. I shall eventually be answering some practical questions that often arise among teachers' or students' discussions.

2. Vocabulary

1.1. Vocabulary and reading: what to teach first?

For practical reasons, the new words in a reading passage should be taught separately and their teaching should also precede the teaching of the reading passage. In fact, as will be seen later, the pupils, while reading the text, should no

longer be hampered by the new words. It might however happen that the passage includes too many words that cannot be taught right before the lesson of reading. 8 to 12 words are an acceptable average. When there are many new words, some of them can be taught within the text and their explanation should be as simple as possible.

1.2. How to determine the new words

In the case where there are too many new words, the teacher must follow a number of criteria for the choice of the new words to be taught.

1.2.1. He should favor active vocabulary much more than passive vocabulary

A speaker of a given language is always likely to use some words more than others in his daily activities. This is active vocabulary. There are some other words that are much more technical and that appear for instance mainly in written speech and that the speaker would utter more rarely. This is passive vocabulary. Passive vocabulary however should not be neglected. I actually think that the teacher should sometimes use it while teaching English to help the more intelligent pupils enrich their vocabulary. However, he should not use it in difficult contexts that would render the message difficult to understand.

1.2.2. Cognates can be left out when the teacher judges that their meaning resembles the one of the target language. The problem with cognates is that they often have different pronunciations. This problem is easily overcome by the use and repetition of such a word within the text.

1.2.3. Grammatical items can also be taught later. A simple explanation through examples would suffice. In fact, when the main types of lessons can be subdivided into vocabulary, reading, grammar and dictation, the grammatical items can be thoroughly studied during a lesson of grammar.

1.2.4. Words for which the meaning may be inferred can be left out. Inferring meaning for such words, that is, leading pupils to imagine the meaning of a new word through questions that clear out the context, will help the pupils develop the ability of trying to understand some new words without necessarily using the dictionary.

1.2.5. Preference will be given to the new words repeated in the text and those without the explanations of which the text would remain difficult to understand.

1.2.6. Preference can also be given to words for which the meaning may be easily extended; e.g. such words which have derived forms; e.g. to lie, a liar. However, this does not mean that all the meanings of a word should be explained. The words to be explained should in fact favor the understanding of the text in which they appear.

1.3. Main steps in teaching vocabulary. Three basic steps are important in the teaching of the new words.

1.3.1. An oral introduction. This joins the principle that hearing should precede speaking for the learner. This oral introduction can be done in a context similar to that of the text, especially when the word is explained within the text; it can also be done in a logical context different from the one of the text. Various techniques for teaching vocabulary as will be listed later in 1.4. fit here.

1.3.2. This oral introduction must be followed by the repetition of the word by the pupils. This repetition can be done through answers to the teacher's questions or the pupils simply repeat the word either in groups or and especially individually. The teacher must require a correct reproduction of the word of the pupils.

1.3.3. The teacher must finally check the understanding of the word. This can consist of reading pupils' facial expression, seeing whether all of them have understood. At this stage, the pupils can also prove their understanding of the words by giving their own examples.

Oral introduction, repetition by the pupils and verification of the understanding of the new words should be present but the order in which they are applied should not be rigorous. Whereas oral introduction always comes first, the order of repetition and verification can interchange.

The pupils will copy the new words and the explanations after these three steps. Allowing pupils to write while proceeding with these three steps does not push the pupils to concentrate their attention to the learning of these notions. It does not encourage them to turn such new words into active vocabulary.

However, there are teachers who suggest that for the upper secondary school forms, the pupils should be writing while the teacher gives his explanations. This can be justified by the fact that pupils must also be trained to taking personal notes as the lesson evolves. At the university, they will in fact be required to take such notes frequently.

1.4. Strategies for teaching vocabulary.

In presenting a new word, the teacher should not limit himself to the use of a single strategy. He should present the word in various contexts that will render the meaning of the word as clear as possible.

1.4.1. Demonstrations. The demonstration should be accompanied by the appropriate gestures. The different steps are:

1. Oral introduction of the word
2. Demonstration of the action
3. Repetition and verification through other contexts.

1.4.2. Visual aids, drawings and realia. The steps are:

1. Oral introduction
2. Showing the visual aids or making quick drawings on the blackboard

3. Repetition and verification through questions.

1.4.3. Use of synonyms and antonyms. When the teacher has got a synonym or an antonym for the word at hand, he immediately says it after introducing the word. Repetition follows.

1.4.4. Translations. Translations should be used as a last device when the teacher notices that the pupils cannot understand the word. This is the case for abstract words.

So far, these various strategies do not require much time and can be used if the teacher wants to go fast or to give a short explanation. Whenever possible, these strategies fit for the explanations of words met within a text. The following ones require much more time.

1.4.5. Context. The teaching of vocabulary through a context can be made through the following approaches.

- Either the teacher chooses to present one word after another through individual contexts. In this case, the steps are:
 1. Questions to pupils that help to create the situation for the context
 2. The teacher says the pupils' answer. He repeats the same answer introducing the new word. While introducing the new word, he emphasizes on it in his intonation.
 3. The pupils repeat the sentence with the new word. This repetition is followed by the verification of the new word through other questions.
- Or the teacher chooses to make 3 or 4 different contexts. Thus dividing the words (say 12 or 15) into sub-groups. In regrouping these words, the teacher sees in how far he can associate their meanings. Mills (1975) gives very interesting examples of this. I will just mention one group of words.

“Tar, to stick to, to cut free-“The road from (Cotonou) to (Bohicon), is a good road, it's hard, it's tarred road, there is tar on it. There isn't any tar on the road from (Bohicon) to Parakon. Is there any tar on ...? What colour is tar? It's **sticky**. If I touch tar, my hand will stick to tar. Look, this table has got tar on it. I'm touching the tar. Now my hand has stuck to the tar. What will I have to do? I'll have **to cut myself free**. How shall I cut myself free? I shall cut myself free with a knife”(demonstration si possible)
- Or the teacher tries to integrate all the words in a simple logical context. The words being thus related to each other can be easily remembered by the pupils when he re-reads the context. He will in fact remember the different actions that were performed during their presentation such as the teacher's gestures and his own reactions. This is psychologically true and I have often been amazed to find that some of my pupils who

repeat the year remember the same examples I had given while presenting some new words. The different steps are:

1. Creation of the context by telling a story. The teacher often interrupts the story by having pupils help build the context.
2. The teacher progressively introduces the new words. Pupils repeat them. The teacher uses some of the preceding strategies to render the meaning of these words clearer by way of demonstration, use of visual aids, synonyms and antonyms. The teacher quickly verifies the understanding of the new word and then proceeds with the story until it ends. While explaining, the teacher can be using visual aids or pictures or drawings on the blackboard to show the different phases of his story without writing any word on the blackboard.
3. The teacher puts questions to pupils whose answers will be a text he will be writing on the blackboard. That text will include all those new words, this time being given and used by the pupils. I should point out that this text will actually be the one the teacher will have prepared at home. As it is a logical story, the pupils give it a title and they write it in their exercise-books.

While writing the text on the blackboard, the teacher may be leaving blank spaces in places of the new words. He becomes thus sure that the pupils can utter them correctly without seeing the written image. After writing the text, the pupils re-read the text and the teacher fills in those blank spaces preferably with a colored chalk as the pupils read the sentences. He may also underline those new words. Here is an example of such a text I have already used in my 5th form:

A dreadful scene

We were driving at a high speed when we suddenly halted. My wife had seen from a distance, a lion which was sniffing the air. I didn't see the lion and had to rub my eyelids before seeing it. I heard my wife utter something in her mother tongue. The lion had caught a springbok. It was sucking its blood. This was a real dreadful scene. My wife couldn't stand it and I could painfully keep her from crying. Meanwhile, I took my rifle and stretched my arm to shoot that lion. My wife suggested me that I ought to shoot it immediately. I waited and calculated thoroughly how I could shoot it right in the eye."

If there are words which could not be integrated in such a story, they can be explained after. The teacher gives their synonyms or definitions and writes some model sentences that render their meaning clear.

1.4.6. Use of definitions and model sentences. The different steps are:

1. The teacher writes the new word on the blackboard
2. The teacher gives its meaning and writes it on the blackboard.
3. Practice of this new word in questions and answers.

4. The teacher writes sentences for copying on the blackboard. These sentences are given by the pupils although the teacher may add his own ones.
5. The pupils copy the definitions and sentences in their exercise-books.

1.4.7. If there are few difficult words in the text, the teacher may also choose to write these words on the blackboard with their meanings.

1.4.8. Inferring meaning. As I have previously written, this strategy should be used while explaining some new words within the text. The steps are:

1. The teacher puts questions around the new word to render the context as clear as possible.
2. The teacher puts other questions the answers of which can only lead to the use of that word.
3. This is followed by the steps of repetition and verification.

1.5. Devices to render the repetition step more lively.

1. The pupils can repeat the word after the teacher several times
2. The teacher asks questions in which the new word is found. The pupils' answer will also contain that new word.
E.g. Is it dreadful to see a lion killing a man? (teacher)
Yes, it is dreadful to see a lion killing a man (pupil)
3. The teacher asks a pupil to put a question to his classmate using that new word.
E.g. Teacher: Lilian, ask Philip if it is dreadful to see a lion killing a man.
Lilian: Is it dreadful to see a lion killing a man?
Philip: Yes, it is dreadful to see a lion killing a man.
4. Use of substitution drills. The pupils may be replacing a structure in a sentence keeping the new word in it.

While practicing repetition, the teacher shouldn't forget to insist on the right intonation and rhythm in the pupils' sentences. He should also look for such sentences which render the word easy to pronounce as I shall show in a later section (see section 5).

1.6. The verification step. The pupils' understanding of the new notions can be best verified through the teacher's questions to his pupils. He can be putting the following kinds of questions.

1. Questions about parts of the object to see if the pupils can differentiate that object from others.
E.g., has man got blood? If you cut the skin of a tree, will you find blood?
Then in a fish? In an animal?

2. Use of nonsense questions. E.g., is this book (showing saliva)? Nonsense questions also help to relax the class because they are humorous.
3. The teacher may ask examples of the pupils.
4. The teacher can also use true false statements to see whether they are able to choose the correct answers. He simply pronounces a sentence and asks the pupils if it is right or wrong.

1.7. What to write in pupils' exercise-books.

This will of course depend upon the strategies that have been used. Pupils might write words followed by definitions and model sentences that render the meaning of the word as clear as possible. They might also write short contexts or a single short context which includes all the words. This short text which should be different from the context of the reading passage is given a title. It is necessary to give new words in a different context to push the pupils to recognize the new words in the text as they read it.

1.8. The use of phonetic symbols in teaching vocabulary.

The teachers' opinions greatly vary about this issue. The answer should be left to the teacher's own judgment. For those who support the use of phonetic symbols, one should be writing the phonetic symbol before the written image, preferably in colored chalk.

However, I personally think that phonetic symbols are useless precisely because the pupil can always recognize the word through various repetitions. A word does not appear only once. And the teacher should be making the pupils use the new words as often as possible even in later lessons. Children, while acquiring language, and many teachers who have learned English cannot really assert that phonetic symbols had been of some help at an earlier stage during their secondary school. It may, however, be used for some words only and not systematically. One should keep in mind that phonetic symbols are a metalanguage which can be another burden for the stumbling pupil for whom the mere fact of learning a foreign language is already difficult. Repetition of the new word can best replace it although its use is suggested in the official programme of DRC for example.

1.9. What to avoid.

1. The teacher should avoid to be wordy. He must always have in mind that the pupils are the ones to do the greater part of the talking. He shouldn't therefore engage in long explanations of the new words.
2. When a notion is already known, the teacher should not go on asking examples of the pupils. The presentation of each new word should not take more than three minutes.

II. Reading.

2.1. Aims. In determining the aims in a reading lesson, the teacher must try to answer the following three questions: first, what immediate goals can the pupils achieve through such a lesson of reading? Secondly, what long-term

achievements will they have drawn from such lessons? Thirdly, which culture can they acquire through such lessons?

Listening and comprehension, as answers to the first question, are the fundamental aims in lessons of reading. However, developing pupils' oral fluency in reading, acquiring the correct prosodic elements, i.e. intonation, rhythm and stress should also be emphasized. One might object that fluency in oral reading is irrelevant because the pupils will rarely get the opportunity of reading aloud in their life. When they rarely do so, it would be regrettable to notice that they merely decipher words instead of reading sense groups. Fluency in reading sense groups should therefore be trained.

As answers to the second question, pupils should be trained

- to read as quickly as possible
- to skim a text in order to look for some specific information
- to read silently for comprehension of a message. In fact reading aloud often hinders one from understanding what one reads. Silent reading is a useful key to the comprehension of a text.
- to read for main ideas in a text
- to read without knowing all the difficult words in a text. The pupils should not always overuse their dictionaries while reading. This would very much prevent them from enjoying their books.

As for the third question, it is up to the teacher to decide whether he should also teach about the culture conveyed by the foreign language. As has been often stressed, language is a crystallization of its speakers' culture and learning a foreign language always supposes learning about that culture. However, many language teachers have opposed this principle objecting that it is not necessary to learn the culture of the foreign language. Such teachers suggest that one should consider a foreign language only as a tool for communication purposes. I personally think that we cannot reject both views. An African learning English or French should not try to become an English man or a French man. He should retain his African personality. However, a language does not consist of words only. The prosodic elements such as rhythm, intonation and stress also help convey the message and any student learning a foreign language cannot keep from learning them. More than anything, the prosodic elements are closely linked to a native language speaker's cultural attitude. Moreover, it is also intellectual enrichment to know about other cultures. Reading lessons can help achieve these aims. In SGAV methods, the use of proper prosodic elements is an important tool to phonetic correction.

2.2. What are the criteria for the choice of a text?

To begin with, the text can be written in prose or it can be a piece of poetry. It can also be an excerpt from a larger text or from a newspaper, etc. Its choice must depend upon:

- a. Its specific value, for instance the kind of language it presents both for the lexicon and the grammatical structures.
- b. Its intrinsic importance for the present and for the future. This will depend upon the sections in which the text is taught. Scientific sections

in secondary or high schools will be much more interested in scientific texts.

- c. Its length. Short texts that can be taught during one or two hours should be favored. They should also convey a complete message and offer ways of being expanded, as for their content for a later exploitation. Longer texts and novels can also be studied in class and it is up to the teacher to choose the appropriate best strategy to teach them.

The SGAV methods give preference to natural texts pupils can effectively come across in their life. Such texts are excerpts from magazines, letters, and posters. However, in our African teaching situations, I think that we cannot rely exclusively on such texts. The more traditional texts remain valuable; what is important is to know how to exploit them for the purpose of letting the pupils speak naturally in the target language.

2.3. Main steps in a reading passage. As I have said, a reading lesson usually comes after the presentation of the vocabulary to allow its easy comprehension. The main steps are:

2.3.1. Presentation of the text. This consists of

- summary of the story followed by very general questions about that summary. However, in the upper secondary school forms, this summary is no longer important unless the text is really very difficult to understand.
- silent reading of a text (the whole text or part of the text)
- the teacher's oral reading of the text followed by general questions about its global comprehension.

The first step aims to put the pupils in a situation through which the lesson will develop. At this stage, the teacher can still explain some new words the pupils might have not grasped. But he should no longer engage himself in systematic presentation of that vocabulary.

2.3.2. Questions on the text. These questions aim at testing pupils' comprehension of and listening to the text. General questions on global comprehension also help achieve the aim of testing their listening ability. Most of the strategies I shall propose in a later point fit here (see 2.4). These questions may be of three kinds:

- a. Precise questions on the facts of the text. They consist most of the time of the questions: who is ... who are ... what happened then ... Did he or did they ...

The answers to these questions are found in the text. Depending upon the level of the class and the degree of difficulty of the text, the pupils' books can be closed or open.

- b. Questions on vocabulary and grammatical structures to test their proper comprehension. In fact, there should not be too wide a gap between grammar lessons, vocabulary lessons and lessons of a reading passage

precisely because vocabulary and grammatical structures are found in texts.

- c. Questions for which answers suppose a background. This gives the opportunity to the teacher to elicit cultural facts which are suggested by the text. They will consist mostly of why-questions.

2.3.3. Synthesis. This synthesis can be done by the teacher and much better by the pupils and the teacher. It can consist of

- giving the summary of the story preferably by the most brilliant pupils. The less brilliant ones could re-tell it after;
- such summaries can be told by several pupils, the other pupils adding facts to the first pupil's story;
- the teacher can put questions the answers of which are the summary of the story. These answers to the questions or these summaries can be oral or written.

2.3.4. Further development. The text should be a pretext to let the pupils speak. They can do so by

1. Dramatizing the story as it is. The teacher can follow these steps:
 - all the class decides on what things and what ideas to use for the performance. The teacher can schematically write these ideas on the blackboard.
 - the teacher designates the most brilliant pupils as actors and gives them roles
 - the pupils start dramatizing the story. The teacher gives partial corrections. At the end, he gives some other corrections of pronunciation, word structure, etc. Before letting the pupils use oral speech, he can make them mine the story. Here, communication with non-verbal speech is important.
 - the pupils re-perform the story
 - another group re-performs it until 3 or 4 groups have done it.
2. The teacher can ask the pupils to imagine a different ending to the story.
3. Facts in the text can also be changed and the pupils imagine how the story evolves. As we see, the chosen themes resemble those of the lesson so as to allow a re-utilization of the notions already learned. The themes chosen later differ from those of the beginning. They must present a direct interest for the pupils.

After doing this, the transition to written skills becomes smooth and easy. The pupils can be asked

1. to re-write the summary they gave orally in the classroom
2. to tell the story that has been dramatized in their own way
3. to write a different ending of the story.

Pupils will thus write things they have already done in the classroom. The written skill will be dealt with in a later section.

2.4. Practical strategies to reach the above aims.

2.4.1. Read and look-up

To help read sense groups and avoid deciphering words while reading aloud; to train them to use proper prosodic elements while reading a text, the following steps can be used. After choosing a short paragraph,

1. The teacher tells or decides with the pupils where to limit the sense groups of words in the book or on the paper.
2. The teacher shows a model reading, beating on the table, to show when he has to read. He silently reads a sense group, then looks up and utters it. He reads the following sense group, looks up and utters it.
3. The pupils are made to do the same. Whenever the teacher beats on the table, they look up and utter those sense groups of words.

A variation of this technique is:

1. The teacher writes a text, preferably a short paragraph, on the blackboard.
2. He divides it in sense groups.
3. He gives a model reading.
4. He reads the first sense group, individual pupils, or, eventually a group of pupils reads; he reads the second and the pupils imitate him until the end of the paragraph.
5. The pupils start reading individually or in small groups, the teacher only beating the table to tell them when to read. The text is thus read several times by different pupils. While reading, the teacher can start to erase parts of the text beginning by nouns, then verbs, then adjectives and finally conjunctions, articles and pronouns. Whenever he erases a word he replaces it with a dash. This helps the pupil to see where the words have been cleaned. At the end, one will find such a text: The - - - / - a - - / - - - - / - the - of - - / .
6. At the end, the pupils will be able to repeat the paragraph by heart and they can be asked to re-write it as a kind of dictation.

If pupils are afraid to spoil their books by writing in them with a pencil, the teacher can give them a short text to be thus read as a dictation that will be first corrected. The pupils can also write such a short text on their sheets of paper and mark the limits of the sense groups on it.

However, it is not necessary for the pupils to completely memorize the text. If they can already read the paragraph fluently, the teacher will have reached his aim. Eventually, he can give another short paragraph to the pupils and tell them to limit its sense groups and practice the same kind of reading (first, silently, and then, aloud).

2.4.2. Inferring meaning. As I have previously said, this technique is used to make the pupils find the meaning of a new word. The steps are:

1. Putting questions to elicit the context
2. Putting questions which zero in on the word in question.

A number of strategies aimed at testing the comprehension of the text begin by pupils' silent reading of the text or part of the text. They are the following ones.

2.4.3. Reading for the main idea.

This aim can be achieved through these techniques.

1. The pupils silently read the text looking for the answer to a question the teacher writes on the blackboard. The answer to that question is the main idea. The answers can be oral or written.
2.
 - The pupils read silently
 - The teacher writes some sentences on the blackboard and one of the sentences is the main idea.
 - The pupils read the sentences and choose the main idea.
 - The teacher may ask through different questions why they choose that single sentence and not other sentences as the main idea.
3.
 - The pupils read silently looking for the main idea.
 - They write their main ideas on a sheet of paper.
 - The teacher writes their answers on the blackboard. He does not have to re-write the same idea twice.
 - The pupils choose the main idea.

The teacher may want to know how many pupils succeed and how many failed.

2.4.4. Pre-questions and silent reading to test comprehension and to train pupils to skim a text and find specific information. The steps are the following:

1. The teacher writes a number of questions on the blackboard.
2. The pupils read silently looking for the answers to those questions.
3. The pupils answer those questions. (Answers may be oral or written).
Here, the teacher should limit the pupils' time to read the passage.
He can even limit his question to one or two and further limit the time.

2.4.5. True-false statement to test comprehension of the text especially of details; to test the pupils' comprehension of the vocabulary and of the grammatical structures. The steps are the following:

1. The pupils read silently
2. The teacher writes some 5 or 7 sentences on the blackboard. Some of them are correct and some of them are wrong. He may even take verbatim some sentences from the text.
3. The pupils write on a sheet of paper whether the sentences are right or wrong.
4. The pupils give their answers orally after reading the sentences on the blackboard, the point being that he should let the pupils speak and justify their answers.

2.4.6. To incite pupils to put questions on the text, these steps can be followed.

1. The teacher puts different questions of comprehension on the text to which the pupils answer.
2. Pupils sit in groups and silently read the text. While reading they look (each pupil) for two questions they will put to the class. The teacher controls the class and corrects the form of some of these questions. Pupils can eventually correct one another's questions, thus working in groups.
3. Pupils start putting questions to each other in the classroom.

2.4.7. If there are not many difficult words in the text, the teacher may choose to write the few words on the blackboard and write their meaning. This can be particularly useful when the teacher wants his pupils to skim a text.

2.5. The teaching of a poem.

Because of the language and the style they use, pieces of poetry are more difficult to teach than texts written in prose. To avoid growing seeds of distaste for poetry in pupils, the teacher should not engage in difficult explanations. The pupils should simply understand the poem on their level. The following steps can be proposed:

1. Give the poem to the pupils as it is. Tell them to read it. They can read it at home or even discuss it in groups of three or four pupils.
2. Pupils think of the questions they might be asked. They write those questions on a sheet of paper and if possible, the answers to those questions.
3. In the classroom, the teacher writes their questions on the blackboard. He does not have to write the questions containing the same idea twice.
4. The pupils and the teacher start answering those questions beginning by the easiest ones.
5. Eventually, the pupils can dramatize the situation of the poem. This will help them feel it.

Note: The teaching of poems should not be frequent and they can be taught preferably in the upper forms.

Another way of presenting a poem.

1. The teacher creates the situation of the poem through questions to pupils. He progressively lets the pupils find the different elements of the poem. Sometimes he must suggest other elements and make the pupils repeat them.
2. Expressive reading by the teacher. This reading of the poem is followed by general questions. The pupils may also read the poem silently. Then the teacher puts questions of comprehension on it.
3. Finally, the pupils can be asked to memorize the poem for the next class or they can try to re-organize the poem in their own way; e.g. drawing its content or whatever they might choose to do with it. They can also be asked to rewrite the contents of the poem in their own way.

2.6. The teaching of a novel.

2.6.1. As for the novel, some passages will be sufficient. The teacher may apply some of the techniques I have described above. However, he should not prevent the pupils from reading easy novels for their own interest.

2.6.2. The teacher may also use J. Lutoslawska's following experiment:

1. Give books geared to the pupils' level.
2. Tell them to jot down the difficult words. They look them up in a dictionary or ask the teacher.
3. The teacher asks pupils to explain random passages from the book (say, after a month). Eventually, he asks general questions about the book (Lutoslawska 1975: 196)

2.7. What to avoid in reading lessons.

1. Choral reading as well as choral answers should be avoided as much as possible because they do not allow a real control of the pupils' pronunciation. However, in large classes, they can sometimes be used to give the opportunity to all the pupils to speak. But, in this case, one should divide pupils into small groups of three or four persons and should constantly go back to individuals whenever possible. Choral reading can also be used as I have previously said in the read and look-up technique.
2. Long silent moments by the pupils should be avoided because this does not allow them to practice oral speech. A summary of the text followed by the teacher's model reading and his reading paragraph after paragraph should be split by questions requiring the pupils' intervention.
3. Getting pupils to read sentence after sentence is sometimes boring. It is worse when the teacher asks choral reading because, in so doing, he no longer controls pupils' speech. However, silent reading and read and look-up techniques should not be the only opportunities to let the pupils read. They can at times read special paragraphs about which the teacher wants to put some questions or that he wants to explain.
4. Looking for specific sounds in a text cannot be much encouraged because it serves no purpose. It surely does not control the pronunciation of the pupils and rather becomes studying about English and not learning English.

2.8. Some remarks on technical English.

As J. Lutoslawska says, it is not necessary to stress on an oral-aural approach when teaching technical English. Reading is much more important! The aim is to understand not to produce technical English. Here, translations can be used. J. Lutoslawska (1975) proposes the following approach (that I summarize):

1. Give the text and tell the pupils to translate it.
2. The teacher corrects and grades the translations in order to establish the most common mistakes.

3. The teacher writes the grammatical and lexical items that presented special difficulties. The teacher then composes sentences for pupils to translate; those sentences will include those words and structures.

Some of the techniques listed above can also be used to teach technical English. The teacher will take care to explain some characteristics of scientific English like:

- the use of the passive voice,
- words ending in -ing (nouns, adjectives, verbs)
- different meanings of words,
- special compounds,
- abbreviations,
- special plurals

E.g.,	basis	bases	micron	micra
	crisis	crises	minimum	minima
	criterion	criteria	nucleus	nuclei
	datum	data	ovum	ova
	fungus	fungi	phenomenon	phenomena
	genus	genera	serum	sera
	medium	media	viscus	viscera

- prefixes and suffixes.

E.g., prefixes: non- = not, who does not, who isn't

mis- = wrong, wrongly

dis- = away, apart, opposite to, not

suffixes: -ness = state, condition, quality of being

-less = without, unable to

-en = to form verbs from adjectives or nouns

- false cognates

- etc.

3. Dialogues

Although many language teachers recognize the necessity of teaching through contextual situations that can allow the pupils to use it in a more natural way, they have hardly given up the traditional method that divides the teaching of a language into stereotyped types of lessons of grammar, reading, dictation, vocabulary, corrections of mistakes, etc.

Lessons taught from dialogues have the advantage of presenting conversational English in a natural way since those dialogues are based on situations which form the backbone of speech. Some methodologists rightly think that they should be best conceived as an application of parts of the language that have been learned in the classroom during some other lessons of grammar, reading, vocabulary.

3.1. What do they elicit?

- They can elicit vocabulary drawn from a text, either of a single new difficult word or various words the meaning of which can be associated to one another.
- They can elicit grammatical structures.
- They can elicit ideas from a reading passage. In so doing, they allow an easy application of the new vocabulary and grammatical structures of the reading passage.
- They can help the teacher correct mistakes of pronunciation.
- They can also illustrate a less common style level and highlight specific cultural features or customs.

As it is impossible to bring real dialogues of everyday conversation in the classroom for practical teaching purposes, the dialogues taught in the classroom must fulfill certain conditions.

3.2. Conditions of a dialogue for classroom use.

- It must contain 3 to 10 exchanges, thus it should be short enough to be easily memorized.
- Every utterance must have a length a pupil can repeat after two repetitions by the teacher.
- It should illustrate a given item (or given items): new words, new structures, some cultural features, etc. These items are of course chosen according to the aims the teacher wants to achieve in his lesson. Such words will have been presented to the pupils in a vocabulary lesson or a grammar lesson. Dialogue is just practice.
- It should consist of a natural and logical interchange.
- It should be rather simple (i.e. not containing too many characters) and be adapted to the level of the pupils. While devising it, the teacher should take the pupils' psychological interests into account.
- It should be well balanced enough to give the partners the opportunity to use some of the new items.

3.3. Main steps of a dialogue.

1. Pupils hear the dialogue, learn it, and perform it.
2. Pupils do exercises based on the dialogue.
3. Pupils use the dialogue as a departure point for free expression.

As for point one, pupils may hear the dialogue by listening to the teacher's model reading first. If the teacher uses a tape-recorder, he can play the tape once or twice. This step allows the pupils to have a global comprehension of the situation. This is followed by the learning of the dialogue. It can be done in the following way.

1. With the teacher's help, pupils learn utterance by utterance. Choral repetition, individual repetition and repetition by groups of pupils will be called on here. The teacher should favor individual repetition as often as possible.

2. The teacher makes the pupils repeat the dialogue in pairs. Student X repeats X's utterance and student Y answers him by repeating Y's utterance. He makes most pupils repeat in this way, taking care of the pupils' correct pronunciation.
3. The teacher also explains the new structures or new words the pupils might not know.
4. The teacher helps the pupils memorize the dialogue by using the following techniques:
 - He can tell the pupils to close their eyes, thus making them shut out extraneous matter and begin to memorize the dialogue. To avoid confusion in the pupils' mind, he may assign the role of X to some pupils and the role of Y to the others. At this stage, the teacher can write the dialogue on the blackboard or ask the pupils to dictate it to him. However, if the blackboard is large enough, he can write it at the beginning of the lesson and hide it with a piece of cloth. He will uncover it at this moment.
 - He can be erasing some utterances; e.g. those of X.
 - He can erase the words which are on the right side of the blackboard.
 - He can be erasing groups of words, beginning by nouns, adjectives, verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, etc.
5. When the pupils already know the dialogue, they perform it.
 - They may perform it with words immediately, using the appropriate gestures.
 - They may mime the action first and utter the words after. Miming the action helps them to interiorize the type of language they will be expressing.
 - One group may mime the action of the dialogue and another utters the words.

This repetition step should not take too much time, otherwise it will become boring.

The second step as I have said is doing exercises based on the dialogues. Such exercises will allow the pupils to interiorize much more the new structures and new words or cultural features the dialogue has been devised for. At this stage, the teacher can cope with grammatical items much more systematically as is usually done during lessons of grammar. As has often been said, lessons of grammar present the disadvantage of teaching about the language and not teaching the language as such. In fact, one may wonder whether pupils are always able to use the new structures that have been learned in such grammar lessons in a productive way or in their free expression. It has also been argued, especially by the SGAV methods propounders, that the use of substitution drills and transformation drills which are often practiced in such grammar lessons are merely an intellectual gymnastics precisely because they are done out of any situational context. I think that such drills can be made much more efficient when they are taught in a dialogue context. The procedures are:

1. Pupils practice with some utterances of the dialogue using repetition drills, substitution drills and transformation drills. The teacher will concentrate pupils' practice on the new structures (or new words) the dialogue has been devised for). The sentences are manipulated independently of the dialogue.
2. The sentences are once more drilled within the framework of the dialogue.

The third step, i.e. using the dialogue as a departure point for free expression, is very important. The pupils should be able to use the new structures and the new words in a much personal way to prove that they have interiorized them. This phase can be exploited in the following way:

1. The pupils begin to alter the dialogue to make it conform to the reality around; e.g. using their own names, telling the exact time and the exact ideas.
2. The teacher can ask the pupils to add some more exchanges that would be a logical continuation of the dialogue.
3. The students may paraphrase the lines of the dialogue.
4. The teacher can outline a situation similar to the one of the dialogue and have pupils write it as a dialogue.
5. The dialogue can be used to stimulate free conversation among pupils.
6. The pupils can be asked to summarize it in prose.
7. The pupils may write the dialogue in their copy-books; at times, the teacher should ask them to re-perform it now and then. During such performances, it will not always be important to repeat all the exact words. The teacher will be satisfied if the pupils can reproduce the new structures or new words.

4. Grammar

To help pupils get a global apprehension of the grammatical structure, the inductive method is preferred to the deductive one. In the latter one, the teacher would give a rule and make the pupils find examples that elicit that rule. This method cannot sustain the motivation of the pupils. However, with the use of the inductive method, some methodologists still think that when teaching grammar systematically, one tends to teach about the language and not the language itself. This disadvantage may be overcome in teaching grammar through dialogues and stories as has been hinted at in a previous paragraph (see 3.3.)

4.1. Main steps for the induction method.

1. Examples by the teacher and the pupils
2. Induction of the rule which should be schematic like a formula.
3. Application and control of the learning of the new structure

4.2. As for the first point, how to present those examples? The teacher can apply some of the following ways:

- The teacher utters the model sentence. Pupils repeat it. The teacher writes it on the blackboard and underlines it, preferably with a colored piece of chalk.
- The teacher asks a question. The pupils give an answer. The teacher rephrases that answer with the new structure. The pupil repeats the new structure. The teacher or the pupils writes it on the blackboard.
- The teacher can put a question and the pupils' answer will be the model sentence that he writes on the blackboard.
- The pupils may complete the teacher's sentences.
- The teacher may already use such simple drills as the substitution drill and the correlation drills. Quickness is not required here. The pupils should simply be acquainted with the new structures.
- The teacher may manipulate pupils' answers in order to make them find the same structure in other answers.
- The teacher tells a short story and makes the pupils repeat model sentences within the story. He also writes those model sentences on the blackboard.

4.3. For inducing the rule, the following procedures can be applied:

1. The pupils read some of the sentences. If the teacher did not underline the new structure, he does it now.
2. The teacher puts questions on the context in order to elicit the rule. Pupils may find the rule. The teacher writes it schematically. Pupils re-read that schematic rule. The teacher is thus sure that they understand it. Sometimes, it may not be necessary for the teacher to write the rule if it is clear from the examples.

4.4. The practice will consist of

- further examples by the pupils,
- exercises in the book
- drills e.g., substitution drills,
 correlation drills,
 question-answer drills,
 transformation drills.

4.5. The purpose of the drills being habit-formation, they should be fast enough. The pupils no longer learn anything at this stage. If a pupil cannot find the answer immediately, the teacher should say it and make him repeat the right answer or tell another pupil to give the answer. Explanations should also be avoided. The teacher should call on pupils at random and not follow any fixed order. Here are some examples of drill patterns the teacher can use at his will.

4.5.1. Substitution drills.

E.g.,	We're		finishing the lessons
	They're	-	-
	He's	-	-
	I'm	-	-

4.5.2. Correlation drills.

E.g., She ate her lunch yesterday
 He - - - -
 You - - - -
 They - - - -

4.5.3. Transformation drills. Here is an example.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| - T. They live in Matadi | P. They've lived in Matadi for a year |
| - T. Does Sofi call you every month? (last week) | P. Did Sofi call you last week |
| Do they pay you every month? | Did they pay you yesterday |
| Do you meet my friends? | Did you meet my friends |
| - T. He goes there | P. Does he go there? |
| He is coming | Is he coming? |
| - T. Did he see them | P. Yes, he saw them |
| Are you ill | Yes, I am ill |
| - T. Did you tell him | P. Tell him please. |
| Do you drink wine | Drink wine please. |

4.5.4. Indirect question drills.

T. Ask Malu if he spoke Lingala before he came here.

P1. Malu, did you speak Lingala before you came here?

P2. Yes, I did. I spoke Lingala before I came here.

T. Ask Y if ...

P1.

P2.

For further ideas on drills, see R. Box (1974:35-48). The following are strategies that further recapitulate the teaching of a grammatical structure.

4.6. Strategies for teaching grammatical structures.

1. Grammatical situation
 2. Progression
 3. Comparison of structures
 4. Presentation of rules.
-
1. Grammatical situation.
 - Create the need for a new situation
 - Teacher gives a model sentence; the pupils repeat the model sentence
 - Teacher confirms comprehension of situation and structure through questions and answers
 - Pupils practice the structure with drills
 - The teacher elicits the synthesis of the new structure.
 - Pupils copy

2. Progression.

- The teacher presents a previous grammatical structure for review and consolidation
- The teacher uses the new situation, beginning with the previous structure.
- The teacher gives a model sentence; pupils repeat the model sentence
- The teacher confirms the comprehension of the situation and the new structure through questions and answers.
- Pupils practice with new situations, through questions and answers
- Synthesis, that is, writing the rule in a synthesized form; e.g. I am used to –ing.
- Pupils copy the model structures and the synthesized rule in their exercise-books.

3. Comprehension of structure (i.e. use of contrast)

- The teacher elicits an example of one known structure through questions and answers
- The teacher will be writing the examples on the blackboard, 3 to 4 sentences that elicit that structure in the example
- The teacher creates a new situation for the new structure
- The teacher gives a model sentence; the pupils repeat it and practice it through questions and answers
- The teacher writes the examples on the blackboard
- The teacher and pupils contrast both structures through questions and answers, drills and examples.

4. Presentation of rules.

- The teacher presents a sentence that illustrates the rule
- The pupils examine the similarities between the examples. The teacher elicits or gives the rules
- Steps 1 and 2 are repeated for the illustration of every grammatical rule the teacher wants to elicit.
- Pupils practice applying the rules through examples. This is an opportunity of also reviewing other grammatical structures, the spelling and the pronunciation of plural nouns, the pronunciation of the third person singular as opposed to other numbers like the first person, the second person singular and plural, the spelling of the -ing forms, the -ed forms, etc. The point is that, as the teacher makes the pupils find the correct examples in which they use the newly-learned structure, he brings them to use certain structures by asking such questions as: X, ask Y whether he ought to wear a new dress when he has got a bad cold.

5. Correcting techniques

In the classroom, pupils are likely to make three kinds of mistakes for which appropriate techniques should be proposed. They are:

1. Structural mistakes

2. Mistakes of pronunciation
3. Mistakes against logic.

5.1. The correction of structural mistakes.

- The teacher interrupts the pupils and repeats the idea in a correct form whenever possible. However, the teacher should not over-interrupt the pupils and tell them to repeat the correct form at every moment. Otherwise the pupils will lose much of the flavor of what they say. It is sometimes sufficient for the teacher to repeat kindly the correct form and let the pupil go on with his speech.
- The teacher can use simple drills (substitution, repetition) to help the pupils learn the correct form.
- When the teacher has noticed several common mistakes, he can teach a mini-lesson to correct them.
 - a. He writes wrong sentences on the blackboard
 - b. The pupils tell where the mistakes are
 - c. The teacher or the pupils write the correct form.

5.2. The correction of mistakes of pronunciation.

According to Guberina, father of the SGAV methods, a foreign language learner can be compared to a deaf. He does not always perceive correctly the sounds of the foreign language; he rather interprets these sounds through the sound system of his mother tongue. It is therefore necessary to re-educate the learner's ear to help him perceive the foreign sounds correctly.

Practical techniques:

1. Repetition of the sound in a normal utterance.
2. The teacher puts the sound or the difficult word in the appropriate intonation and rhythm pattern bearing in mind that quick rhythm and rising intonation help to correct tense sounds whereas slow rhythm and falling intonation help for the correction of lax sounds. There are in fact languages which are tense; e.g. French, and others which are rather lax; e.g. English. A pupil who produces b as p or g as k shows that he perceives b and g as tense sounds. He should therefore be made to reproduce them in a much more relaxed way. Actually, need of relaxation to speak English is necessary. The teacher can even be using relaxation exercises in the classroom.
3. The teacher can be beating the rhythm of the utterance on the pupils' shoulder or he can make him beat it on the table with his hand.
4. While beating the rhythm, the pupil can reproduce first the melody of the utterance without words and he reproduces the rhythm and the words after. For reproducing the melody, the pupils can be uttering the mmmmmm sound or the lalalalalala sounds.
5. The teacher can use the backward build-up technique; e.g., for the word antitotalitarianism, the teacher proceeds as follows:
 - tarianism
 - talitarianism

- totalitarianism
- antitotalitarianism

For training the pupil to learn the right intonation of an utterance, the teacher can use the building-up technique.

E.g., I saw

I saw him

I saw him there

I saw him there in the train

I saw him there in the long German train

6. The teacher can whisper the difficult word at the ear of the pupil. As human beings are much more sensitive to low frequencies, they perceive such a whispered sound more easily because whispering consists of low frequencies.
7. The teacher may eventually lengthen the difficult sound.
8. Sometimes, the teacher may use
 - the nuanced pronunciation

e.g., If a pupil produces the sound [E] as [e], the teacher tells him to repeat it as [a], He then comes back to the correct sound, assuming the following sound system of vowels:

i	u
e	o
E	□

a

The teacher can use this last technique as a solution when the preceding ones have not yielded good results.

To test pupils' perception of sounds, the teacher may use sound discrimination by uttering minimal pairs or triplets.

E.g., sit seat ship sheep
 sit seat sit seat sit sit

He then tells the pupil to identify the sound.

I personally do not appreciate this technique precisely because, finding minimal pairs is difficult and its use supposes that the pupils already know many words. As the SGAV methodologists would put it, this resembles intellectual gymnastics.

- The teacher may think of special games and songs for the correction of certain mistakes.

5.3. The correction of mistakes against logic.

The teacher may repeat the idea and ask the pupils what is wrong in it. If the pupils cannot correct it, he does so and makes the pupil repeat the correct form.

6. The practice of dictation.

A dictation should consist of a text the vocabulary of which is well known. It is merely practice in the correct apprehension of sounds apart from spelling and meaning. It should not be thought of as a test but a useful exercise that combines the hearing of speech with the writing and reading of it. Here are some procedures.

6.1.

1. Explanation of new words. The teacher writes them on the blackboard.
2. The teacher reads the whole text
3. The teacher reads the dictation sentence by sentence in breath groups. The pupils write after hearing each breath group. One of the pupils writes the text on the blackboard.
4. Last reading by the teacher.
5. Correction by the pupils. They exchange their papers, underline mistakes and count them. The teacher tells them to write their names on the papers they correct and to be careful not to leave any mistake, otherwise they will lose some grades.
6. The pupils make the necessary corrections on their sheets of paper.
7. Optionally, the teacher may re-dictate the same text. He does the second correction at home.

6.2.

1. Pupils learn a short paragraph in sense groups.
2. Progressively, the teacher deletes categories of words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, conjunctions, etc.)
3. Pupils repeat it orally.
4. Pupils write it.
5. Last reading by the teacher to allow pupils to correct their text.
6. Correction by the pupils in the classroom after exchanging their papers. Pupils write the different sentences on the blackboard.

6.3.

1. The teacher reads a number of sentences (3 or 4) three or four times.
2. Pupils reproduce the text as closely as possible.
3. Correction (preferably at home).

6.4.

1. The teacher reads a paragraph
2. The teacher puts questions and the pupils write the answers. All the answers constitute the dictation.
3. Correction of the dictation.

6.5.

1. The teacher gives the text with blanks (where new words and structures will be filled in).
2. The teacher reads the whole dictation once.
3. The teacher re-reads the text. The pupils write it either from reflection or as the teacher reads the dictation.

4. Correction in the classroom. Pupils can write the sentences on the blackboard.

6.6.

1. The teacher writes the text on the blackboard.
2. He erases it after making the pupils read it once or twice.
3. He dictates it. One pupil can write it on the blackboard.
4. Correction by the pupils.

6.7. The dicto-comp.

1. First reading by the teacher
2. The teacher writes cue words on the blackboard. He takes those words from the text.
3. The teacher re-reads the text and a pupil re-writes these cue words on the blackboard, leaving out blank spaces where other words will be written.
4. The teacher reads the text two or more times. Then the pupils try to reproduce the paragraph as faithfully as possible.

7. Criticism of lessons.

In this section, I propose a number of items the evaluator has to take into account when observing a lesson. These items can also help the teacher make his own criticism of his lesson. Secondly, I will propose a synthetic observation table that can help the evaluator write his points of criticism.

7.1. A model of an observation table.

Teacher:

Date:

Title of the lesson:

Evaluator:

Objectives on the knowledge and attitudes
foreseen:

Place:

Class:

Hour:

realized:

A: Communication:

1. Level of the logical organization of the contents
2. Amount of information given
3. Number of directions. Are they given step by step and do they contain only essential words and gestures?
4. Control of comprehension.
5. Utilization of the material at the teacher's disposal
6. Teacher's language.

B. Methods used:

7. What about stirring up motivation?
8. Correction of answers.
9. Does the teacher use individual or group activities?
10. Is there allusion to transfer?

11. Have the steps been executed in a proper order?
12. Did the teacher use extraneous steps which could subvert the goals?
13. Have the strategies been executed in a reasonable amount of time?

C. Climate in the classroom:

14. The teacher's intervention in relation to discipline.
15. The teacher's attitude towards pupils (familiar, neutral)
16. Pupils' attitude (familiar, neutral, indifferent)

7.2. A synthetic observation table.

Time	Steps	Techniques	Suggestions & advice	Various data
------	-------	------------	----------------------	--------------

In the column of time, the evaluator writes the exact time during which the teacher starts the various steps. This helps him see which amount of time has been used for a given strategy.

In the column of steps, the evaluator writes the main steps that are used:

e.g., in a reading lesson:

1. Warm-up
2. Vocabulary (number of new words)
3. Copying
5. Reading, etc.

In the column of techniques, the evaluator writes the various techniques the teacher uses in accordance with the different steps.

E.g., warm-up: telling names
 questions about the previous lesson
 vocabulary: 1st word: demonstrations, context
 2nd word: demonstration
 copying: erasure technique
 the teacher controls pupils' exercise-books.
 Reading: silent reading
 true-false statements.

In the column of suggestions and advice, the evaluator jots down remarks about the lesson, having in mind the points of criticism I have suggested in 7.1, more particularly the objectives of the lesson.

In the column of various data, the evaluator writes other remarks he could not include in the other columns; e.g. his opinions about the directions that have been given, the teacher's gestures, his clothes, his efforts to stir up motivation, discipline, etc.

Thus, the table will look like the following one:

Time	Steps	Techniques	Suggestions & advice	Various data
7:35	Warm-up	Telling names Pupils-pupils T-P questions about the previous lesson		
7:40	Vocabulary	to cheer: demonstration, repetition by the Ps	Pupils should repeat the whole utterance and not the individual word only. Make the pupils repeat the sentence while you're writing on the BB.	You tend to put questions to the same pupils. The teacher is at ease very smiling, good.
8:00	Copying	Erasure techniques	Good. Don't forget to check pupils 'exercise books	
8:05	Reading	Silent reading True-False statements	Good to control the pupils foresee statements that appeal to the Ps' own judgment.	

8. Writing skills.

8.1. In-classroom compositions.

Since we cannot always be sure that the pupils do their home-works, it is advisable to make them practice guided compositions in class as much as possible. Here are some procedures.

8.1.1.

1. Tell a story to the pupils and put questions on it to check its comprehension.
2. The teacher writes a number of questions on the blackboard that will help the pupils re-tell the whole story.
3. The teacher gives to pupils a subject similar to the one of the story he has just told and asks the pupils to do the composition by answering the questions written on the blackboard.
4. This is followed by the correction partly in the classroom (in simply answering those questions) and mostly at home by the teacher (underlining mistakes in red).

8.1.2. Use of pictures.

1. The teacher shows a number of pictures to the pupils.
2. He tells them a story reproduced by those pictures.
3. He writes a number of questions on the blackboard to help pupils reproduce the story.
4. The pupils do the composition by answering those questions.

8.1.3.

1. Pupils read a text or the teacher tells them a story.
2. The teacher puts some words and structures on the blackboard.
3. The pupils write the story using those words and structures.

8.2. Home-works. Possible home-works can be:

- Reconstruction of a story.
- Giving another ending to a story seen in the classroom
- Programmed composition:
 1. Pupils and teacher prepare the ideas in the classroom
 2. Pupils do the homework at home. The teacher should tell the pupils to limit the number of words they will use and thus train them to write as many ideas as possible in a short text.
- Writing letters to each other about what they saw in the classroom. After the correction, the pupils give those letters to their partners and tell them to answer. They will write about the same subject, this time correcting their home-works.
- Making summaries

- Re-telling a dialogue seen in the classroom. They may copy sentences with slight changes. They may paraphrase some ideas.
- The pupils write a free composition. After ending it, the teacher asks them to keep it. After they have seen a number of new structures in the classroom, the teacher tells the pupils to re-read their home-works and correct them. After five or six such corrections, the pupils hand it back preferably with the corrected home-works.

9. Testing techniques.

Following Schollaert (1974), here are a few suggestions for testing reading comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

9.1. For testing reading comprehension, use

- True-False statements
- Selecting the most appropriate answer to a question asked about a text.
- Yes-no answers

9.2. For grammar, one can use

- Multiple choice. While writing the different sentences of the multiple choice, the teacher should foresee good distractors. Each item of the multiple choice should consist of at least 4 sentences.
- Answers to questions, e.g.: when did you arrive?
- Completing sentences
- Filling in blanks
- building sentences with given structures
- Correcting sentences.

9.3. For vocabulary.

- give synonyms.
- Define the word or give the word that corresponds to a definition of a word
- Use translation
- Use multiple choice
E.g., what he saw in the distance is a seal
1. stamp 2.sentry 3. Musician 4.wild pig.
- Making choices in French or in a language that the pupils know.
- Ask the pupils to describe what they see in a picture.
- Pupils complete sentences.
E.g., a man who makes bread is ...
- Using the word in a context that makes its meaning clear.

9.4. For pronunciation

- do a dictation

- make the pupils read aloud (here one has to disregard intonation when grading the pupils).

Whereas the teacher must be giving different kinds of tests along the year, he should see to it that the examinations are complete as much as possible. They should include dictation, oral comprehension, oral expression, composition, vocabulary, grammar, and reading aloud.

10. The attitude of the teacher in the classroom.

- He should be smiling because one always prefers to speak to a smiling person.
- He should be interested in his lesson. The pupils may reject a course material because of its teacher who is not interested in it. This also includes mastering one's course material.
- If possible, combine lessons. If the teacher notices that a lesson does not draw pupils' interest, he should switch to another lesson.
- At times, the teacher may tell the pupils the aim of the skill he wants them to practice.
- He should be patient and sensitive. If the pupils cannot produce the correct reaction, he should not condemn them too soon.
- He should speak naturally in the classroom.
- He should walk to various parts of the classroom. This helps the pupils feel his presence among them.
- Wrong answers or mispronounced words should be repeated in a correct way.
- He should be a critical listener.
- He can be using songs to relax the class.
- At a later stage, he should introduce pupils to different levels of language: e.g. circulars, radio news, publicity, interviews, speeches uttered by different categories of people.

11. Some practical remarks.

11.1 Use of the blackboard.

- For a lesson of grammar, number the sentences and underline new words and new structures.
- If possible, use colored pieces of chalk to highlight key words.
- Make use of drawings to explain new words (and eventually new structures).
- If possible, divide the blackboard into two parts: one part to write model sentences and another part for drawings or sentences by the pupils.

11.2 Performance of dialogues.

- At the first repetition, the teacher corrects some mistakes. He should take care not to interrupt the pupils very often. He can be writing some mistakes on a sheet of paper. After that first repetition, he gives general

remarks and makes other pupils practice or the same group can re-perform its dialogue.

- The pupils should never speak at the same time.
- They should not also turn their backs to the audience.
- They should speak clearly, distinctly, and aloud.

12. Teaching English in difficult situations.

12.1. No books for the pupils.

For grammar lessons, the teacher can simply copy the various grammatical structures foreseen by the official programme and teach them as usual.

For reading passages and vocabulary lessons:

- He collects new words from a given text suggested by the programme and teaches them using techniques I have described above.
- The teacher puts these new words in a context preferably with given grammatical structures. The text should be relatively short.
- He may put various kinds of questions on that text, that is, questions the answers of which are objective facts, questions on the background of the text and questions on the new grammatical items.
- He may lead them to practice writing skills, reading skills with such a text.

If the teacher finds a relatively long text that is interesting, he may wish to tell it to the pupils. In this case, he may build the contents of the story with the pupils thanks to his questions. He can then write the main ideas on the blackboard and tell the pupils to reproduce the whole story. Such a text can also be written on the blackboard.

12.2 Large class.

The teacher should vary individual repetitions and repetitions by groups of pupils. The teacher should also be walking to various parts of the classroom.

12.3. Weak class

- The teacher should work with those who are mostly interested by letting them seek his cooperation in correcting written exercises for instance. Here and then, the weak pupils can be repeating what the brilliant ones say.
- The teacher can ask written answers and check as much as possible.
- The teacher can be using translation in giving directions or in putting certain questions. However, the pupils must give their answers in English. The pupils may also tell their difficulties to the teacher in their mother tongue (French 1970).

12.4. Timid Pupils.

- The teacher should praise them as much as possible for any slight progress they make. This will help them gain confidence in themselves.

- The teacher should always begin with brilliant pupils and make the timid ones repeat after.
- The teacher can be using group repetitions for them.
- The teacher should make them explain the things they know.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to suggest various techniques to render the teaching of English in our African secondary schools much more lively. As has often been stressed, there is not a method that can yield automatically perfect English. However, success with a method also depends upon the attitude of the teacher. He will achieve his teaching aims if he cares seriously about his lesson-preparations. A danger which haunts old teachers is to use the same lesson-preparations over several years. This is bad precisely because it does not allow progress in the ideas. The teacher should try to do his best to instill new ideas in his courses as much as possible. Therefore, the methods I have just proposed here are, by no means, exhaustive. The teacher can still re-think them and re-adapt them to his own teaching situations.

Note:

This paper was written while I was still an English teacher at ISP-Bukavu (DRC). It has been circulated by the Centre d'Animation Pédagogique, but has never been published. I wrote it as support material for the training of teachers of English in the upper forms of secondary schools in DRC. While teaching at the University of Yaounde 1, I was asked to assess a doctoral dissertation of a candidate whose work was on the promotion of the teaching of African languages. I realized that, because the teaching of African languages is still new, evaluators of lessons of African languages do not have well spelt-out criteria to help them evaluate these lessons. It dawned upon me that our teachers of African languages would gain much insight in teaching African languages if they are aware of what has rendered the teaching of English as a foreign language so successful around the world. If you think about it, the teaching of African languages does not have to have a different methodology from the one of English or other languages whose methodology has been well worked out. That is why I found it imperative to publish this paper as well as the other paper "Revival of classroom activities through exercises" in this volume so that they might inspire teachers of African languages to better teach these languages. To make it easier for such teachers to get directly to the section of the paper where they need specific information, I give the contents of the whole paper here.

Main points of the paper:

1. Vocabulary
 - 1.1. Vocabulary and reading, what to teach first?
 - 1.2. How to determine the new words?
 - 1.3. Main steps in teaching vocabulary
 - 1.4. Strategies for teaching vocabulary
 - 1.5. Devices to render the repetition step more lively
 - 1.6. The verification step
 - 1.7. What to write in pupils' exercise-books.
 - 1.8. The use of phonetic symbols.
 - 1.9. What to avoid in a vocabulary lesson.
2. Reading
 - 2.1. Aims

- 2.2. What are the criteria for the choice of a text
- 2.3. Main steps in a reading passage
- 2.4. Practical strategies to teach reading
- 2.5. The teaching of a poem
- 2.6. The teaching of a novel
- 2.7. What to avoid in reading lessons
- 2.8. Some remarks on technical English

3. Dialogues
 - 3.1. What do they elicit?
 - 3.2. Conditions of a dialogue for classroom use
 - 3.3. Main steps in teaching a dialogue

4. Grammar.
 - 4.1. Main steps for the inductive method
 - 4.2. Procedures to induce the rule
 - 4.3. Presentation of the examples
 - 4.4. The application step
 - 4.5. The use of drills.
 - 4.6. Strategies for teaching grammatical structures.
5. Correcting techniques
 - 5.1. The correction of structural mistakes
 - 5.2. The correction of mistakes of pronunciation
 - 5.3. The correction of mistakes against logic.
6. The practice of dictation
7. Criticism of lessons
 - 7.1. A model of an observation table
 - 7.2. A synthetic observation table
8. Writing skills
 - 8.1. In-classroom compositions
 - 8.2. Home-works
9. Testing techniques
 - 9.1. Reading comprehension
 - 9.2. Grammar
 - 9.3. Vocabulary
 - 9.4. Pronunciation
10. The attitude of the teacher in the classroom
11. Some practical remarks
 - 11.1. Use of the blackboard
 - 11.2. Performance of dialogues
12. Teaching English in difficult situations
 - 12.1. No books for pupils
 - 12.2. Large class
 - 12.3. Weak class
 - 12.4. Timid pupils

References

- Art of TESOL (1975) *The Art of TESOL, Parts One and Two*, Washington: English Teaching Forum.
- Box, R. (1974) *Teaching English as a Foreign language*, Kinshasa: BEC.
- Cook, C., C. Findlay, M. Wambach (1971) *Welcome to English, Livre du maître*, Paris: Didier.
- ELT. 1974. *English Language Teaching*, vol. XXVIII Number 3.
- Finocchiaro, Mary & Michael Bonomo (1973) *The Foreign Language Learner: a Guide for Teachers*, New York: Regents Publishing Co.
- French, G.G. (1970) *Teaching English as an International Language*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Fries, C.C. (1945) *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Haycraft, B. (1970) *The Teaching of Pronunciation, A Classroom Guide*, London: Longman.
- Klein, J. (1969) 'L'exploitation de la leçon dans la Méthode Audio-Visuelle Structuro-Globale' in *Revue de Phonétique Appliquée*, No. 12.
- Lutoslawska, J. (1975) 'Reading Technical English' in *The Art of TESOL, Part II*, Washington: English Teaching Forum.
- Mills, David (1975) *English for French Speaking Africa. Teacher's Book 3*, Paris: Armand Colin.
- Pit Corder, S. (1969) *The Visual Element in Language Teaching*, London: Longman.
- Renard, R. (1976) *La Méthodologie SGAV d'Enseignement des Langues. Une Problématique de l'Apprentissage de la Parole*, Paris: Didier.
- Rivers, Wilga M., M.S. Temperley (1978) *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Salah A El-Araby (1974) *Audio-Visual Aids for Teaching English*, London: Longman.
- Schollaert, E. (1974) *Teaching English as a Foreign Language*, Ms. Kananga, DRC.

Part Two:
African languages and literacy

Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects

MAURICE TADADJEU

Abstract

The concept of *National Development* has, unfortunately, become a commonplace in Africa, to the extent that its definition is no longer clear. This paper starts out by attempting to clarify this cardinal concept before bringing the main discussion down to the relationship between African languages and local development projects.

Local development projects in most African countries are concerned with improving health delivery systems, providing potable drinking water, improving agricultural methods, protecting the environment, maintaining rural roads infrastructure, constructing and maintaining local schools, participating in the process of rural electrification, etc.

The role of African Languages as media or co-media for elaborating and executing these projects has not generally been at the forefront of discussions on local development. There are two complementary approaches to enhancing this vital role. The first proposes the integration of local languages into preconceived local development projects. The second focuses on the empowerment of local language development institutions so as to enable them to intervene independently in local development projects. In both cases, a close collaboration between language development or literacy agencies and their local development partners is emphasized. An account of specific initiatives undertaken by the National Association of Cameroon Language Committees (NACALCO) in this area is presented as a concrete illustration of the important role of African languages in the process of national development.

1. Introduction

Bilingual adult literacy in local mother tongues (L1) and the official languages (OL) is gradually coming to the forefront of development concerns in Cameroon since the National Association of Cameroon Language Committees (NACALCO) undertook in 1994 to launch a national literacy program now known as CLED (Cameroon Mother Tongue Literacy, Education, and Development project). This paper is an attempt to highlight some of the strategies which are currently being developed to plan and efficiently implement the program.

Today, Cameroon has a population of **16 million** people speaking approximately 248 national languages. In addition, two official languages, English and French, are used in administration and almost all government activities. New legal measures have been taken within the constitution and the bill on the Orientation of National Education to ensure the protection and promotion of national languages. But a detailed official program to implement this general policy is still in the making. CLED is not a government program and

NACALCO is a national Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). However, the progress being accomplished by NACALCO and others is likely to have a significant bottom-up impact in government policy formulation and implementation, because of its success on the field.

This paper actually highlights the role of Cameroon's languages in local development activities. The perception of this role by local development agents is vital. A personal experience of such a local vision is presented as an illustration of the capacity of village people to clearly express their ideas and expectations on local development. Then, a summary of Cameroon's new approach to adult literacy is presented as part of national development projects is presented as part of national development efforts. The point here is to clearly indicate that local language projects per se are development projects. In other words, L1 adult literacy activities are effectively local development activities just like health, agriculture and environmental protection activities. But L1 literacy activities have the capacity of linking up with all the other development projects and impacting them very positively. The general concept of African development is then discussed in an attempt to redefine this fundamental concept which has been misconceived since the early days of political independence.

Finally, literacy workers are brought into focus, especially those who are devoted to imparting reading and writing skills in literacy classes. These adult literacy teachers need to be more systematically supported in their daily work in order for the whole literacy enterprise to gain greater sustainability in Cameroon.

2. A local vision of L1 Adult Literacy.

What do village people think about L1 adult literacy? A clear answer to this question is vital to local literacy and development in Cameroon. As a matter of fact, our efforts are geared towards helping local communities conceive and execute their own literacy programs rather than telling them what to do.

I recently had a personal experience of a local vision of adult literacy in my own language, Yémba. In the paragraph below, I will summarize this experience which appears as a concrete answer to the above question.

2.1. Development discussion with S.J. a local agriculture agent

Early in February 1998, I went as usual to my village to take care of some family and community matters. This is a village of some ten thousand inhabitants called Fokamezo, in the southern part of Bafou (sixty thousand inhabitants) in the Western Province of Cameroon. During my stay, I had an opportunity to visit the farm of a friend, S.J., who is a local agriculture agent. S.J. is now about 47 years old. I have always considered him to be a very intelligent person. He started his career as a primary school teacher before moving to his agricultural advisory function. He is very involved in the Village Development Committee (CODEF) and spares no effort to help resolve some of the many community problems that the village faces.

While visiting his farm, we discussed a wide range of current issues, from his personal difficulties related to the lack of time to manage the farm to more general problems. S.J. complained of some thieves who had stolen a good part of his avocados and mangoes in the farm. He had conducted a personal

investigation to identify these thieves, but now had no way of proving that they were the culprits. Besides mangoes and avocados, S.J. produces bananas and, of course, coffee, which is still the main cash crop in the Western Province. However, he has not been producing green beans, tomatoes, soybeans, and other new cash crops introduced in the village in recent years.

Our conversation eventually shifted to bee keeping business. S.J. showed a great interest in the issue. So, I told him that the principal local literacy supervisor in the Yémba language, Albert Tsomejio, has started training some villagers in bee keeping. He has even set up many hives for himself and produces very good honey. A few months ago, Albert offered me some honey which was very delicious. The basic characteristic of Albert's course is that it is offered exclusively in the Yémba language. I have advised him to write up all his bee keeping lessons in Yémba, so that they may eventually be published in booklet form. This piece of information prompted S.J. to tell me with great delight how he has succeeded in teaching himself to read the Yémba language.

He came, by chance, across a Yémba primer, but was unable to read it at first. Then, going through the pages, he discovered that there was a French translation of all the lessons, in small letters, at the end. So, he read the French sentences to get the meaning and could progressively read the Yémba equivalents. Later on, he went to see a school teacher who teaches Yémba and requested an evaluation of his Yémba reading performance. The teacher was amazed of how well he could read.

Although S.J. could now read Yémba, he did not seem enthusiastic with the idea that he would have to face bee keeping lessons in written Yémba. I sensed that he was questioning the fact of providing such valuable know-how exclusively through Yémba texts. At first, I thought that his reading skill in the language was not good enough for that practical purpose. So, I assured him that Albert's lessons could also be made available in French. In fact, the idea of teaching them in Yémba was to make sure that the French language did not obstruct the acquisition of bee keeping know-how, since most Yémba adults either have a poor control of French, or have no knowledge of it. S.J. was very pleased to hear this. The ideal thing, he said, would be for Albert to eventually produce a bilingual (Yémba-French) bee keeping manual, just like the school primer he had read.

Our conversation now moved to a higher level of abstraction. S.J. said that most of these farmers in the village often forgot important aspects of new agriculture techniques they were taught. I agreed, saying that this was natural since they did not have a good control of the French language in which those techniques were written. S.J. said that he is tired of repeating the same things over and over in oral Yémba. He now believes that at least younger farmers should be taught to read Yémba, and some of the agricultural instructions printed in the *two languages* (emphasis was placed on the "two languages"). He went on saying that most farmers are not really professionals. They only master a set of tasks that they perform routinely, with no ability to explain why they were performing them. I agreed with him, adding that in industrialized countries it is unthinkable that someone would earn a living doing a job for which he had received only an oral training and did not have any reference written material at

hand to consult as need arises. In the Yémba context, we are now with the Yémba language Committee (CELY) moving in the right direction, hoping that through CELY's efforts, language will no longer be an obstacle to the acquisition of useful knowledge. Appropriate know-how should become more and more available in the village, in Yémba and French, for all those who need it. S.J. was very happy to hear all this and added many illustrative comments indicating his endorsement of this vision of local L1 adult literacy.

When I left S.J., I felt that, in the space of a one hour's visit to his plantation, I had learnt, in a nutshell, the essential of both the theory and practice of adult literacy in an African language, as an integral part of local development.

2.2. Understanding S.J. in his social context

To understand S.J.'s overall vision of bilingual adult literacy in Yémba and French (L1-OL1), it is important to know a few facts about the social context of the Western Province of Cameroon. This is one of the most populous provinces of Cameroon with some two million inhabitants. There are probably more than two more million people of Western Province origin living outside of the province. This is also one of the most developed provinces of Cameroon in terms of road infrastructure, commercial activities, a very high schooling rate resulting in high literacy rate (in French), housing, health delivery system, etc. There is probably close to a 55% literacy rate in the Western Province. In fact, probably more than 80% of the people (male and female) below the age of 40 have attended at least primary school. (I do not know of reliable figures on literacy rates in Cameroon).

Schooling is still almost exclusively in French in the Western Province. Mother tongue education is gradually being introduced, through the PROPELCA program. This is a program initiated in the early 80's to introduce Cameroonian local languages into the primary and secondary school curricula, alongside the official languages. It has proven itself to be quite a successful program although it is still largely limited to private schools, because of limiting government policy.

There are about eight written languages spoken in the province. Literacy in these languages is progressing slowly but steadily. The most important characteristic of adult literacy in these languages is that, it concerns people who are already literate or semiliterate in French. Here, many parents, especially urban dwellers, are concerned by the fact that their children no longer speak their mother tongue correctly. Some cannot speak it at all. As a result, a "bilingual literacy" trend is developing with the help of language committees. French is perceived as a prestigious and useful language. But literacy in mother tongue is developed as a means of community and cultural identity. Almost all village activities are carried out in local languages.

The inhabitants of the Western Province of Cameroon are very pragmatic people. They are reputed as successful traders and hard workers. It would be very difficult to develop in this province activities in which people do not perceive their immediate interests. In other words, adult literacy here has to be part of profit making activities whether it be in L1 or French.

A clearly new dimension of literacy is therefore merging from the Western Province, as well as from other provinces such as the North-West, the Littoral, the Center, and generally the urban areas. This has to do with L1 *identity literacy* in a context of high literacy rate in OL1. Here, the objective of adult literacy is not actually to make people literate in absolute terms since they are already literate in their first official languages (LO1), but to make them literate in their mother tongue, so that they can better perform the written tasks required in that language. In such a context, literacy activities may not necessarily result in an increase in adult literacy rate. The issue is therefore not literacy rate but the quality of the literacy rate, or, precisely, the “bi-literacy rate.”

3. L1 Literacy as part of local development

In a recent paper entitled *A new approach to Adult Literacy in Cameroon*, I have outlined the efforts undertaken within the framework of NACALCO to re-launch a large-scale literacy campaign in Cameroon. It is important to summarize here the main characteristics of this new approach in order to clearly indicate its link with local development activities and, consequently, its nature as a development project *per se*.

3.1. Cameroon's new approach to Adult Literacy

The new approach to adult literacy that we have been developing in Cameroon since 1994 is a general vision for the functional use of Cameroon's local and official languages in both their respective communities and corresponding schools. This vision ties up general principles with down-to-earth practical activities, locally initiated and sustained. The main objective is to empower local language groups to develop their languages for literacy, education, and development. We believe that the current economic recession in Cameroon should not be allowed to halt the ongoing mother tongue literacy and education efforts. The revamping of these efforts through this approach should constitute a unique contribution to resolving the development crisis in Cameroon.

I have indicated that, in addition to reinforcing the existing know-how and experience in mother tongue literacy and education in Cameroon, the system of production and distribution of literature and pedagogical materials in these two sectors is crucial to the development of locally autonomous programs. Such a system makes up the critical investment necessary for a long-lasting enterprise in education. It is in fact the empowerment dimension of the process.

We also believe that this approach will turn Cameroon into an authentic model for mother tongue literacy and education in Africa. Given the linguistic complexity of the country and the high potential of success of this approach, many African countries will be able to draw inspiration for their own literacy and education programs from Cameroon. This has already been the case of the PROPELCA experience, and will continue even more. It will become clear for everyone that the multiplicity of languages is not an insurmountable obstacle for Cameroon or any other country in the world (Papua New Guinea has already proven this) but rather a God-given richness for creativity and self fulfillment in diversity.

As indicated in the abovementioned paper, there are at least six strategies to achieve the main goal of L1 adult literacy in Cameroon:

1. The further institutionalization of NACALCO as a national level umbrella organization for local language committees and similar organizations throughout the country.
2. The further organization and development of local level organizations and committees dedicated to local adult literacy, mother tongue education, and human resource development.
3. The provision of training and technical support to local level organizations wishing to initiate efforts in adult literacy and/or mother tongue education, and the establishment of local language news bulletins, and related publications.
4. The strengthening of existing mechanisms for printing and marketing literature and other publications in local Cameroonian languages.
5. The assumption of a coordinating and networking role vis-à-vis other organizations working in the country and using or wishing to use local languages.
6. The promotion of a partnership with governmental institutions, especially the Ministries of National Education and Youth and Sports, in order to harmoniously develop the national literacy and education programs including the functional use of local and official languages.

As indicated earlier, a concrete national literacy project (CLED) is being developed by NACALCO to implement these strategies. It is important to emphasize the fact that the CLED vision has three development dimensions based on the availability of adequate resources. The basic CLED includes the minimum activities necessary to reach a threshold of self-development for the 40 Language Committees already involved in the project, within a period of ten years, subdivided into two autonomous periods of five years each. The minimum activities which are now being implemented constitute the basic CLED. A medium CLED is envisaged, at any time during the same period to include the participation of the governmental partners such as the Ministries of National Education and Youth and Sports. Their involvement will surely bring in greater resources and expand the activities and the number of local languages. Finally, a full CLED is envisaged to include an integrated national program of PROPELCA generalization and CLED generalization. Such a program is envisaged as the main challenge for the Cameroon formal and non-formal education systems at the dawn of the 21st century.

In this endeavor, literacy research is geared toward filling in gaps in our knowledge and know-how in specific aspects of adult literacy. This will essentially involve very small one-year sub-projects. For example, in 1998 (and 1999) we are interested in gathering data from various local adult literacy programs to establish national cross-linguistic criteria for awarding attestations/diplomas to new literates at different levels of performance. This is necessary for the credibility of these diplomas which should in the very near future become nationally accredited. Research findings will be presented in publishable forms for distribution within and outside Cameroon. Occasional

research programs will also be offered to experienced or would-be researchers in the literacy domain. Linguistics students involved in applied linguistics research for their Master's degree are encouraged to participate in this research program.

A NACALCO Center for Applied Linguistic (CAL) is being created as part of the institutional development of NACALCO with the objective of providing Cameroon Language Committees with the highest possible expertise in multilingual education and literacy. In this perspective, permanent training sessions for language committees' personnel are gradually being organized at CAL on specific themes. The content of the training is that of the usual DYL (Discover Your Language) courses which are regularly organized on literacy and writing systems aspects. These training sessions will also be organized at regional levels as need arises. A reason for such training sessions is the upgrading of both urban and rural literacy personnel who need appropriate tools for the better organization of urban and rural literacy in relation with specific language committees programs. The training may focus on writing and orthography principles, material design and production techniques, dictionary making in local languages, organizing and managing literacy classes. As a result DYL courses, organized in the form of credit units, will gradually be offered all year round at CAL, in the evenings, to promoters of urban literacy in mother tongues. The courses can also be given intensively for two weeks to specific groups as it is now done in combined PROPELCA and adult literacy training sessions especially during the months of July and August.

These courses do not immediately replace DYL courses organized jointly by SIL, the University of Yaounde 1, and the Ministry of Scientific and Technical Research (MINREST). NACALCO is now preparing itself through these courses to fully offer DYL courses by the year 2000.

The role of NACALCO is to help each language committee set up and develop its own literacy development plan during the ten years of CLED. A critical level of self-development will be reached by this plan of activities, including: training of personnel, material development, class management, self-financing, and sustainability of already acquired literacy skills through post-literacy activities and so forth.

3.2. L1 Adult Literacy in Local Development

We believe that each language committee's literacy program is a local development project per se. It is not just a language program which may or may not contribute to local development. It is an integral part of local development. There is a need to make this fundamental vision understood and accepted by both government officials and local leaders in Cameroon. Many of them are so used to the top-down vision of development policy (Robinson 1997a) that they tend to be rather indifferent to the new approach we are developing. This new approach is a *mix bottom-up top-down approach*, which combines the general orientation from the national perspective with the specific needs of local communities.

It is not surprising that we should now endeavor to promote a vision of L1 adult literacy as part of development. As we shall see in the next section of

this paper, the concept of National *Development* has, unfortunately, become common place in Africa, to the extent that its definition is no longer clear.

Local development projects in most African countries are concerned with improving health delivery systems, providing potable drinking water, improving agricultural methods, protecting the environment, maintaining rural road infrastructure, constructing and maintaining local schools, participating in the process of rural electrification, etc. But the crucial question of the linguistic medium through which these activities are planned and carried out is rarely brought to the forefront of development discussions. In other words, the role of African languages as media or co-media for elaborating and executing these projects has not generally been an integral part of local development concerns. It is NACALCO's intention to reverse this trend in Cameroon.

There are two complementary approaches to enhancing this vital role of local languages in development. The first proposes the integration of local languages into preconceived local development projects. The second focuses on the empowerment of local language development institutions so as to enable them to independently take part in local development projects. In both cases, a close collaboration between language development or literacy agencies such as language committees and other local development partners is emphasized in the Cameroon's new approach.

I would therefore like to emphasize that Language Committees are local development agencies just like agriculture cooperatives, environmental protection or human rights protection agencies. In fact, in Cameroon, many Language Committees are organic branches of local Development Committees. NACALCO is a development agency at the national level just like any national federation of cooperatives, trade unions, etc. Each Language Committee is a local NGO. They all make up NACALCO as a national NGO.

Besides literacy projects, there are other local development projects in various communities which NACALCO is trying to identify in order to help them develop a literacy component. This participation is a specific and direct link between literacy and development leading to what is commonly known as functional literacy. This is a major orientation in the CLED project. However, NACALCO does not have an established expertise in designing these other local development projects. So, we are developing partnerships with other development NGOs operating in rural areas in order to identify viable local projects with which to link up. An initial meeting to this effect was held at the NACALCO Center on May 9-10, 1997. As a result, a few initial partners were identified and common activities discussed. But this was just a beginning of a long and complex process.

Our involvement with other local development projects is not going to be just a matter of translating these projects into the mother tongues. We do have our own vision of local development in general, which is shared by a growing number of people with a significant level of education, people who have been involved in the activities of their respective *Development Committees* at the village or district level.

It is now generally acknowledged that the village is the societal unit in which most of the local development projects need to be conceived and

implemented. However, the traditional structure of the village needs some improvement to be able to develop and implement projects with significant outside funding. We intend to participate in the reflection on ways and means of bringing about the necessary structural improvement on Cameroon's villages. As a result, for example, when NACALCO's contribution to a Language Committee is directed towards a particular village, there will be a clear way of accounting for whatever is achieved. We believe that village communities need to be made into rural communes in order to attract adequate human and material resources for their development.

3.3. Sustainability

Is Cameroon's new approach to literacy and education a sustainable enterprise? In other words, is NACALCO, along with the CLED project, a sustainable undertaking?

Clinton Robinson (1997b) outlines five principles of sustainability necessary for the planning and implementation of a language program (and actually any important program), namely: vision, relationships, skills, organization, and finances. I have used these principles to informally evaluate the present state of NACALCO and CLED. As a result, it appears to me that CLED does have a vision which has been expressed in various documents, reports and papers during the last four years. NACALCO has been building lasting relationships with a growing number of national and international institutions devoted to the development and teaching of African languages.

The skills now being imparted by NACALCO through its various training courses and supervision and counseling mechanisms are based on the know how and experiences drawn from all over the world. The Center for Applied Linguistics is being developed to ensure that the highest possible expertise is permanently available to Cameroonian Language Committees.

NACALCO's internal structure and infrastructure has been very significantly strengthened, especially during the last two years. Although finances remain a major concern due to the lack of funding possibilities with mid-term perspectives, I do feel that there are enough viable local projects being developed by Language Committees to attract such grants once they become fully coordinated and well known. CLED therefore, appears as a solid and sustainable national program which should deserve not only the support but also the partnership of Cameroon's government.

4. Redefining African Development

The vision of L1 adult literacy as part of local development ties in well with the overall vision of African development as I have seen it for a decade or so. L1 adult literacy should therefore serve as one of the cornerstones of African development in the 21st century.

However, it is necessary to start by recognizing that African development was misconceived from the beginning, that is, in the early days of independence. During the three decades that followed, Africans lived under the illusion that their countries were developing. The generalized crisis starting in the

early 80's came to prove that we had not met the fundamental conditions for development. The need to redefine African development became self-evident.

In a paper entitled *Rédéfinition du Développement Africain* (Redefining African Development) published in 1989, I made an attempt to contribute to such a redefinition. Emphasis was laid on industrial development. This, of course, does not exclude agriculture, health, education, and so on. It only puts them in an industrial, thus more scientific and technological perspective. It is absolutely necessary to make it clear that, after nearly forty years of development efforts in Africa and generally in the Third World, we now know the real nature of the catalytic element in development. It is industry. The Newly Industrialized Countries have emerged as living illustrations of the central role of industry in development.

However, some general conditions are required in Africa for a new development strategy to be meaningful and operational. These include a clear vision of the role of enterprises including language enterprises, as the ideal expressions of an authentic African social model. More importantly, these conditions include a socio-psychological revolution among the African political, economic, cultural, and intellectual elites. For example, if they decide to consume African products in absolute priority, including literature in their own languages, then their example will be automatically followed by the African masses. As a consequence, a new African development process will soon emerge.

4.1. A misconception

The current crisis would certainly not affect Africa so profoundly if we, as Africans, in the early days of independence, had defined, by ourselves, the concept of African development, taking into account our real needs and those for the future generations. To define African development from an external perspective and in global terms including economic, political, cultural, and social sectors, with no clearly indicated key (pilot) sector, resulted in a misconception. In fact, the term under-development used by foreign experts was a substitute to the terms "primitive, uncivilized, savage" and the like, which had justified colonialism. On the other hand, the term "development" was used as a substitute to the term "civilization." In other words, the Western World, through development activities, has been pursuing the same civilizing mission in Africa (and elsewhere) that they had undertaken in the colonial era. African elites have generally followed this wrong historical trend.

In reality, every human society is economically, politically and culturally a developing society. The recent emergence of the concept of *Human Development*, along with its various indicators, is an illustration of this reality. In industrial countries, development is simply assimilated to the normal evolution of the society in response to the internal and external needs of the population.

It is historically documented that the overwhelming majority of books, articles, reports and other documents, which in the 60's, the 70's and even the 80's defined African development and prescribed its strategies were written by non-Africans. The development policies that resulted bear the conscious and unconscious prejudices and biases that those Western experts had on Africa and Africans. More than three decade after independence, the essential of economic,

political, administrative, judicial, and educational apparatus put in place during the colonial era is still here in most African countries, especially the francophone countries.

One fundamental development lesson the world has learned over the last four decades comes from the “Newly Industrialized Countries” such as South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Singapore, which have closely followed the example of Japan. The lesson is simply that these countries have industrialized themselves. In other words, they have evolved from non-industrial to industrial countries. In this process, they have adapted their political, economic, cultural, and educational systems. This means that industry has been the center, the catalyst, the moving force behind the development of these countries. I believe that this should have been the same for Africa. African countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, and South Africa are clear illustrations of the central role of industrialization in development.

It should be noted that the transition from a non-industrial country to an industrial one is almost always accompanied by a passage from a pre-literate to a literate society. Also, there is no industrialized country which does not show a very high literacy rate in its indigenous languages. The reason for this is that literacy necessarily triggers a process of industrialization of languages themselves, through the production, dissemination, and consumption of written materials in these languages.

4.2. What then is African development?

African development is the process of self transformation of the African society from a basically pre-industrial society to an industrial society. This definition applies to Africa as a whole, and not only to some countries. Of course, leading countries are necessarily emerging.

I first learned about the central role of industry in development in a rather dramatic way, from an economics teacher, some thirty years ago, at Collège Libermann in Douala. This French man, in an economics class, was teaching us, among other basic concepts, the notion of under-development. The question of a definition of under-development was raised over and over by students because, frankly, we did not understand what it was all about. One afternoon, the teacher came in and the question was raised again. He got angry and asked us to lay down our pens and look at him. We did so and he said: “I am going to tell you what under-development is. Look at yourselves. Your clothes, shoes, books, pens, exercise books. Look around yourselves, the classroom, and this entire school compound. Look beyond all that, this city and all the *manufactured goods* (these words were emphasized) that everybody is yearning for as a means for improving their living conditions. All that is imported! If all these were to be taken away, if all of it stopped coming in, then you all would run around, naked, wild in the bush as Primitives.” And he added, in a very low voice “which is what you are anyway.” Then he continued: “that is what under-development is. You all live in an under-developed country.” Nobody raised a finger, and since that day, no question was raised again about under-development. But, deep in our hearts, we felt humiliated and we discussed this among ourselves very extensively. Since then, I have learned a great deal about

development and under-development. Nothing so far has indicated to me that industry is not central to the process of development in our countries.

The definition of industry, and consequently that of the emergence of an industrial society, is not static but rather dynamic. An industry is any production unit established as a result of applying certain scientific and technological principles to produce specific goods or services often repetitively and massively. To do this, elements such as equipment, raw materials, know-how and labor have to be combined in an appropriate way. Today, Africa has the essential of these elements, but lacks the political unity to pull them together and make them work. The international division of labor, through major international institutions, has also been a major obstacle to the process of industrialization of the African society.

It should be noted that the above definition of African development is a restricted one, that is, a definition based on the catalytic ingredient, the moving force of the entire development process. As Africa reorganizes itself to become an industrial society, its economic, political, cultural and educational systems will have to be adapted to the exigencies of the new society. But, essentially, Africa's fundamental value system will and should not change, and that is the most important thing. For example, Africa will not need to do away with its languages, its local social system with chieftaincies and the like.

4.3. The key-role of enterprise and the nature of the language enterprise

In an industrial society, the enterprise plays a key-role in the social setup and the daily functioning of the community as a whole. This is becoming true in Africa. But there is a need to clarify certain types of enterprises in order, for example, to help language and literacy enterprises to fulfill their specific functions normally.

I have had the opportunity to discuss some specific aspects of the enterprises in the African context and should not dwell on this issue here. It will suffice to recall that there are universal principles underlying enterprises, but that all enterprises are context-sensitive units. In other words any enterprise needs to be adapted to its social context. Thus, even foreign enterprises coming into Africa need to adapt to their new social environment, taking into account some valuable traditional aspects of the enterprise.

There are currently three major types of enterprises in Africa: private enterprises, public enterprises, and a mixture of the two which makes up the para-public enterprises. The current trend of privatization of public enterprises is rapidly shifting emphasis from public to private enterprises, sometimes through a transitional stage involving secondary emphasis on para-public enterprises.

There is a fourth type of enterprises in Africa, which draw their nature from the traditional social model. For lack of a better term, I have so far called these, communal enterprises (the adjective communal here is an approximate translation of the French adjective *Communautaire*). These are specific types of mixed enterprise involving three types of partners: individuals, communities, and the State. Here, the specific community involved plays a key role in decision making. It can also act as a private body or as a local State body. Most local NGO's such as Development Committees come very close to this definition. Language Committees in Cameroon also come very close to it. In any case, a

literacy enterprise is, as I see it, at least a para-public enterprise and at best a communal enterprise.

Individual writers and language promoters take independent initiatives, at their own risk and often with no future compensation, to start or pursue language development activities. The community as a whole, with its various dialectal differences, has to recognize a Language Committee as a legitimate body helping in standardizing the language and leading literacy and mother tongue education activities. The central government (or at least the local councils as part of the State) has to produce a national language policy and provide general strategies and resources for implementation. Any assistance, brought one way or the other to the development and teaching of the local language, is made in favor of the entire language community and, indirectly, to the entire nation. The language enterprise, and consequently the L1 adult literacy enterprise, is therefore a genuinely communal enterprise. None of the three partners can normally replace the other. This is also the reason accounting for the bottom-up top-down process of adequate language policy formulation in a multilingual context such as Cameroon.

5. Focus on L1 adult literacy teachers: improving the conditions for voluntary action

In Cameroon, most of the people teaching L1 adult literacy in classrooms or similar structures do it on a voluntary basis. But, the role of voluntary action in adult literacy needs to be reconsidered. A sustainable literacy program cannot rely entirely on volunteerism at the grass roots. Some kind of compensation of the literacy worker's efforts should be systematically included in the L1 adult literacy programs.

5.1. Volunteerism as a recognized literacy resource

It appears that volunteerism has long become a tradition in literacy campaigns. In the early days of large-scale literacy campaigns, one worldwide method of voluntary literacy action came to be known as each-one-teach-one. It was discovered and propagated by Franck Laubach in the 1930s. This method, which is still valid to some extent, today simply requires that one literate person teach literacy skills to one illiterate person of his/her choice. The method over the years has been applied in more than 100 countries around the world. Its effectiveness is generally not questioned. However, its basic limitation is that if it is used without the support of follow-up literacy materials, most of the thousands who would become literate in their own languages in a relatively short period of time would also rapidly lapse back into semi-illiteracy or total illiteracy.

Other methods of voluntary literacy action have been implemented in such countries as the former Soviet Union and Mexico. These include the awarding of special cards to those literates who make a given number of other people literate. From the early 1920s onward, the former Soviet Union effectively used its Young Communist League to organize and implement a large-scale literacy program based on voluntary participation. However, the success of large-scale literacy campaigns in that country was also due to an important economic factor, that is, the availability of jobs for the new literates. Another factor was the policy of literacy in the mother tongue. In Mexico, various forms of incentives

were used to encourage literates to help other people become literate. These incentives included tuition waiver for students who had helped a given number of people to become literate. Voluntary literacy action was also widely encouraged by the government in Brazil.

In Africa, there have been diverse valuable voluntary contributions to literacy work. A great deal of these contributions were initiated by religious groups. Many school teachers, highly motivated and educated people, as well as a significant number of students have voluntarily participated in literacy work. Tanzania has stood up as a clear illustration of voluntary achievement in this sector. An unfortunate disappointment occurred during the 1960s, mostly in the francophone countries as a result of the use of French as the medium of instruction in large-scale literacy campaigns. It turned out to be the case that this was simply not the right medium, especially in the rural areas. Thus, various literacy programs there collapsed and the hopes that they carried with them faded away. Since then, most of these countries have changed their literacy policies to include the mother tongue medium.

Experience from the Experimental World Literacy Program indicated that voluntary action is an important means of combating illiteracy. Thus, two of the recommendations of the expert team on evaluation of experimental literacy projects read:

“ – It is desirable to tackle the elimination of illiteracy in a long-term perspective.....

- Such planning should also be as decentralized as possible, in both preparation and execution, so as to reflect clearly the problems of each region and thus arouse the interest and participation of the population in all ways possible: individual initiatives, non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations, trade unions, youth clubs, etc., and in all forms: contributions in cash or kind, teaching volunteers, voluntary construction of facilities, etc. (UNESCO 1976:192)”.

The essential of the above recommendations is today found in one form or the other in L1 adult literacy work in Cameroon. However, it appears that the necessary conditions for an effective voluntary contribution at the grass-roots level have not yet been met. This concerns particularly a limited remuneration of L1 adult literacy teachers.

5.2. Conditions for effective voluntary action in literacy

In Cameroon, as in many other countries in Africa, the image of the adult literacy teacher is not always an attractive one, basically because of the almost entirely voluntary nature of his work. There are great differences in performance between those who teach 100% on a voluntary basis and those who do receive some sort of remuneration, either in kind or in cash. In fact those who receive nothing at all always have some reason to keep on hoping that some day they may be formally rewarded for their work. It is therefore necessary to identify some basic conditions for effective voluntary action in literacy and to incorporate them into any L1 adult literacy program in Cameroon. The following are those I can propose:

First, the duration for voluntary participation must be as short as possible so that the volunteer's enthusiasm may be sustained all the way through. An adult literacy teacher should therefore not be expected to teach for more than one year entirely on a voluntary basis.

Second, there must be sufficient public means (e.g., financial resources and mass media) to support voluntary literacy participation. Some reward in cash or kind for each L1 adult literacy teacher should be yearly included in each literacy program. Also, provincial national language radio programs should be fully involved in promoting L1 adult literacy programs.

Third, a volunteer must be qualified to do the job. In other words, he/she must have been properly trained before fully engaging in teaching.

Fourth, a policy of intellectual and/or moral reward must be initiated to supplement voluntary action in L1 adult literacy. For example, the granting of academic credits to students in recognition of their participation in a literacy program. In this connection, UNESCO (1976:188) suggest that "students at universities, teacher-training colleges and secondary schools, for instance, might be required to make a given number of people literate as a condition for graduation."

Fifth, there must be at least a minimum of effective follow-up reading materials. Given the vital importance of such materials, the financial resources for their production should be generated by both public and private sectors.

It is under such conditions, and others mentioned earlier, that voluntary action can effectively help Cameroon (and Africa) gradually and steadily become a literate society.

6. Conclusion

An official national adult literacy program has not been part of Cameroon's development efforts for over two decades. In an effort to contribute to the systematic re-launching of such a program, NACALCO is developing the CLED project. The success of this project will certainly depend on whether or not it is conceived, regarded, accepted and executed as a development project per se, with its various components at the local level where language committees operate.

This paper has therefore attempted to make a general case for the nature of any L1 adult literacy program in Cameroon and elsewhere in Africa as a genuine development program. The case may now be summarized in the following statements.

- Village people do share the vision of L1 adult literacy as part of local development when it clearly reflects their immediate needs and expectations. This vision is open to bilingual L1-0L1 adult literacy.
- L1 adult literacy programs and agencies are genuine development programs and agencies just as health, agriculture, environment, and human rights programs and agencies.
- Almost any (non-language) local development project can and should develop a literacy component using L1 and eventually 0L1.
- L1 adult literacy is a cornerstone of African development in the 21st Century. It should serve as a redefining element of an authentic African

development in which industry acts as a catalyst and enterprises as the basic operational units.

- Language and literacy enterprises are communal enterprises in which individuals, communities and the State are permanent stakeholders.
- Volunteerism is a necessary but insufficient literacy resource. It should always be supplemented with some specific reward in cash, kind or moral and/or intellectual value/credits.

References

- Dieu, M. & P. Renaud. (eds) (1983) *Atlas Linguistique de l'Afrique Centrale (ALAC)- Cameroun: inventaire préliminaire*, Yaoundé et Paris: ACCT/CERDOTOLA/DGRST.
- Health, S. E. (1972) *Telling tongues: Language policy in Mexico: Colony to nation*, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Laubach, F., E. Kirk, and R. Laubach (1976) *Everyday Reading and Writing*, Syracuse, N.Y.: New Readers Press.
- Robinson, Clinton D.W. (1996) *Language use in Rural Development: an African Perspective*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- (1997a) 'Language policy from the bottom up? Reclaiming language use in Africa', in Brunon Synak and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (eds.) *Language Minorities and Minority Languages in the changing Europe*, Gdansk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdanskiego, pp. 395-406.
- (1997b) Planning for sustainability: A preliminary overview. Unpublished paper. Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, UK.
- Tadadjeu, Maurice (1980) *A Model for Trilingual Education Planning in Africa*, Paris: UNESCO.
- (1989) 'Redéfinition du Développement Africain', in *Revue Afrique Unie* N° 1. Pp. 8-27. Yaoundé, Club OUA-Cameroun.
- (1997) A new Approach to Adult Literacy in Cameroon. Paper presented at the 5th International Conference on Adult Education. Hamburg, Germany, 14-17 July 1997.
- UNESCO (1996) *The Experimental World Literacy program: A critical assessment*, Paris: the UNESCO Press, UNDO.

Literacy in Cultures of Oral Tradition

CATHY DAVISON

Introduction

Of the more than 6,800 languages in the world today, half are at risk of extinction within this century, some because of war and epidemics, others through economic exigencies that cause parents to teach their children English, French or Spanish instead of the local languages in their areas. One response to this trend is the effort to develop writing systems for these languages, so that, as one native Machiguenga (a local language in Peru) speaker put it, 'If I learn to write my language well, it will never disappear' (Cahill 2000:1)

What are the socio-cultural and political influences on literacy learning in the environment of a previously unwritten language? What are the implications of such a context for teaching adults whose language has only in recent years been put into writing? This paper will look briefly at the influences of a primarily oral society on literacy learning and teaching, the range of opinion surrounding the literacy-orality debate, and the effects that such considerations could bring to bear on the literacy classroom.

The range of opinion on literacy and orality

The range of opinions on the significance of the differences between literate and oral information processing as the primary means of communication within a culture vary significantly and have differing foci. In what he termed "the Grand Dichotomy," Goody posited that the use of a writing system was a primary determining factor in the cognitive development of a society. (Goody 1977: 146-148) The act of recording oral communication, according to Goody, brought about the possibility for reflection, examination and revision of information, which in turn gave rise to a "rational" mode of thought" and the development of abstract thought, (Goody 1977:150) particularly through the development of "the role of the inner ear" and the clarification of one's thinking (Goody 1977: 160)

Goody's generalizations were challenged by Parry (Street 1984: 98) in his study of the Veda and the strictness of that oral tradition. Parry believed the determinants of cognitive skills were dependant on a wider range of contextual variation than Goody examined.

Ong took the study of the effects of writing in an oral culture further, to elaborate a set of defining characteristics of thought and expression in a primarily oral culture as 'additive ... aggregative ... redundant ... conservative ... close to the human life world ... agonistically toned ... empathetic and participatory ... situational'. (Gee 1994: 173-174) Ong's work highlighted the centrality of the role of "oralist discipline" in the education of society's elite, and predicted the "decay" of the vitality of oral dialogue when it becomes 'textualized, formalized, fossilized in a written system'. (Havelock 1991: 15)

Havelock described the area of research as a competition between orality and literacy and called for a theory covering the oral-literate equation (Havelock 1991: 19), stating: 'the secrets of orality, then, lie not in the behavior of language as it is exchanged in the give and take of conversation but in the language used for information storage in the memory'. Good oral language style needed to be rhythmic and narrativized. Havelock argued for the priority of orality over literacy, on the basis of human experience, the "storage function of language", the importance of the poetic experience in our psychological makeup and the act of memorization over creativity, while at the same time acknowledging the importance of the role played by literacy: 'Without modern literacy, ... we would not have science, philosophy, written law, or literature, nor the automobile or the airplane.... The secret of that success lay in the superior technology of the Greek alphabet' (Havelock 1991: 24)

Scribner and Cole redefined the boundaries of the determinants of cognitive thought through their study of different literacies among the Vai of Liberia. Through investigation of different uses of different kinds of literacy, they concluded that it was not the process of becoming literate that affected cognitive skills as much as the process of experiencing the formal education system. (Gee 1994:177-178)

Olson, Hildyard & Torrance took the literacy-orality argument one step further, stating, 'Literacy does not cause a new mode of thought,' but that the consequences of being literate and the roles played by literacy in a society, while vital in an industrialized society, were negligible in a traditional society. Thus, literacy is only important in what it enables people to accomplish (cited in Olson & Torrance 1991:1).

Why an oral culture influences literacy learning and teaching

'[L]iteracy has no effects—indeed no meaning—apart from particular cultural contexts in which it is used, and it has different effects in different contexts' (Gee 1994:182)

In a context in which the language has not previously been written down, the meaning and power invested in literacy come primarily from an incomplete understanding of and desire to attain knowledge and skills which come from outside the culture. A drive to be a part of a larger society and thus to benefit from the goods available in that society are powerful motivators, but are based on perceptions which are not wholly accurate. The perceptions that literacy will lead to development and employment invest the literacy learning process with a meaning and motivation that are, sooner or later, frustrated when expectations are not met.

Some cultures desire literacy in order to record and retain their cultural values and traditions, but the very act of writing down legends and traditions changes their character, whether, as Goody held, by making them more rigid, or, as in Parry's example, allowing more leeway in their authority and interpretation, a change has occurred. Again, the expectations of a literacy program in such a context have been, in some measure, thwarted.

These examples cite not only the motivations for literacy, but the definitions of literacy by a certain populace. The oral context will not have

prepared learners for a formal education style, the relationship between teacher and learner, or expectations for and interactions with written texts. The sociolinguistic context is often one of devaluation of the local language, accompanied by a sense of power and authority coming only in the official language of the region, be it French, English, or a dominant local language used more widely in the area. Teaching local language literacy in such a context can cause a shift in self-esteem and even in language prestige.

How orality issues might affect literacy teaching practices

The mechanisms of modern education place primary emphasis on the speedy mastery of reading and writing as a preparation for the curriculum of secondary schools and adult life. Should we not be prepared to consider the possible conditions imposed upon the management of our educational systems by our oral inheritance? (Havelock 1991: 21)

Havelock's focus was on the richness of communication, the wealth of culture which he felt was constrained by and lost through the process of reducing oral communication into written form. This view was only slightly weakened by his argument that the primacy of orality over literacy called for a priority of the act of memorization over creativity or invention, since he also stated the nature of the poetic (oral) experience as more important than the prosaic (literate) form. His approach is developmental in suggesting stages of acquisition of oral skills necessary before literacy skill can be fully effective, such as training the ear to listen before training the eye to read. Havelock held that 'good readers ... grow out of good speakers and reciters' (Havelock 1991: 21), and that good speaking and recitation must fulfill the oral style conditions of narrative action and rhythm. In the teaching of literacy, Havelock proposed that the process of literacy acquisition should mirror the process of learning to speak, and should thus be 'preceded by a curriculum of song, dance, and recitation and accompanied by continual instruction in these oral arts'. (Havelock 1991)

Street (1984) emphasized the need to take into account the complexities of different literacies and media usage in the discussion of literacy and orality. His ideological model, which assumed an interrelatedness in the meaning of a specific literacy and the social institutions and political contexts in which it is practiced and thus, an inseparability among a given literacy, the ideological and political nature of literacy, the process by which it is acquired, provided perhaps the most helpful basis of understanding from which to build a literacy program in a specific situation, such as a traditionally oral society (Street 1984:8). The issues relating to a particular program, following Street's model, grew out of the context in which it was set and the particular meaning given to literacy practice in that context.

An example of this ideological model was seen in Heath's study of literacy use in three communities (Gee 1994) sought to investigate ways in which children learn language and literacy as a part of the process of socialization in their different communities. Although Heath was not looking for a distinction between oral and literate cultures, the study's findings highlighted characteristics of each group that closely mirror characteristics of oral societies. Perhaps

because the goal of the study was to explore literacy use in diverse contexts, Heath's conclusions focused on bridging skills necessary for adults and children to acquire literacy skills, which involved the ability to give what-explanations; to analyze verbal input; to pick up on characteristic features of events and items and to be able to put them together in different settings; to give reason-explanations and to draw meaning from written texts and be able to discuss them (Gee 1994:188).

Heath's study, for this reviewer, underlined the question of the purpose of literacy in oral and residually oral societies. If the literacy instructor is in fact creating a bridge for those in an oral tradition to be able to pass into a literate learning environment, the characteristics of an oral society must affect the teaching style, not to the exclusion of a formal classroom process, but as a stepping stone from the known to the unknown. There can be no starting place other than what the learners already know. The literacy classroom must find ways of compensating for the lack of literacy experiences and print environment. One of the most productive methods would be the use of writing, where there is little available to read. Literacy courses in traditional oral societies should place a high emphasis on writing exercises on all levels. They are active and engage the learner, they involve motor skills as well as cognitive skills, they can be repetitive and formulaic in nature and can begin using a narrative form, in parallel to the characteristics of oral societies described by Havelock (Havelock 1991: 24), while at the same time creating the reading environment and literacy experiences which are appropriate to the learners' age levels, as prescribed by Heath (Gee 1994: 188)

Changes that could be made to teaching practices

In a newly or emerging literate environment, a mix of oral and literate practices should be employed. Different literacies, including the cultural literacies already mastered by the learners, should be used to create a common base on which to build new skills. Classroom activities need to compensate for the lack of literacy skill practice in the community with exercises that teach how to interrogate a text, how to read a picture, and in some extreme cases, increased basic skill practice of letter-sound recognition, chunking and word-attack practice. Focus on creating a literate environment through individual student and group writing takes on greater importance when there is little else available to read. The first writers also become first editors, as together the first classes of people to ever become literate in their language decide what sounds most natural in their language rendered in a written style.

A non-literate environment limits the materials available to develop and reinforce reading skills. A literacy program in such a context needs to compensate for these aspects, creating literate opportunities and instituting change to incorporate literacy activities into the local lifestyle. Classroom atmosphere and teaching routines need to instill the most basic of literacy skills, which are not evident outside of a literacy classroom in this ecology, such as how to hold a book, turn a page, hold a pencil, orient the reader to the illustrations, and imagine the interaction with a text one is preparing to read. Teachers need to compensate for the lack of literate environment by providing examples of literate skills and literacy practices.

The literacy classroom must be responsive to the cultural context of the learner, using classroom knowledge to inform daily life, providing a bridge between the practices and expectations of the learning environment and the demands of daily life in the surrounding community. Interactions among learners, between facilitator and learner, and with the subject matter must be addressed in a language that is understood by all, from a culturally appropriate perspective, which may not be democratic or equitable, but which provide a safe base where the learner knows what to expect and how to interact, and from which the learner is able to risk new experiences and come to understand other ways of responding to and interacting with new information that will aid in their advancement in the academic (and broader, developed) community.

For example, the “classroom” may be the shade of a large mango tree in the middle of the village, appropriate because it is open to all and new information is not being hidden, it is the accepted place for important matters to be discussed, mats on the ground in the shade provide a comfortable environment, wall charts on a stand or on the tree trunk provide a literate environment giving models of the information being presented and a means of representing the progress the learner is making, women in one area and men in another allows a freedom of interaction without jealousies, calling on only the younger students avoids bringing shame on the elders.

By paying attention to the broader social context, the educator is able to introduce new information in the least anxiety-producing atmosphere, allowing learners access to new concepts in an environment that makes sense to them. It may also serve to lessen the stress and mystique of a more formal academic setting for future learning.

Much that is considered appropriate in the most advanced critical literacy classroom comes full circle to being the methods most appropriate to an early-stage literacy classroom. Working in groups, in a spirit of cooperation, dialogue between student and teacher and among students, discussion in the mother tongue, relating issues to life outside the classroom and learning to apply ideas and concepts to other areas, and varying the approach to allow for a range of learning styles (Janks 1993: iv), all aid in the facilitation of incorporating literacy into a previously unwritten culture.

Conclusion

As Heath (cited in Street 1984) concluded, a strict division between oral and literate practices is a concept employed by researchers that does not reflect the true interaction of the two domains across cultures. In order to study ways in which literacy is acquired or cognitive skills are developed, larger socio-cultural patterns must be taken into account (Street 1984:125). Yet, the socio-cultural and political influences of a primarily oral tradition on a literacy classroom are far-reaching and wide-ranging, from the self-esteem and prestige of a language group, to the expectations of the community for outcomes of the literacy program, to the kinds of reading materials available to new readers. Teaching practices that take into consideration the community environment and seek to apply learning to new situations will help learners to bridge the gap between oral and literate learning environments.

References

- Cahill, M. (2000) 'Langues en péril' [Endangered languages], in *Rapport d'activités* [Annual report] [Brochure], Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- Gee, J. (1994) 'Orality and literacy: From "The savage mind" to "Ways with words"' in Maybin, J. *Language and literacy as social practice*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, (pp. 168-192).
- Goody, J. (1977) *The domestication of the savage mind*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Havelock, E. (1991) 'The oral-literate equation: a formula for the modern mind' in Olson, D. & Torrance, N. (Eds.). *Literacy and Orality* (pp. 11-27), New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Janks, H. (1993) *Language and position*, Johannesburg, South Africa: Witwatersrand University Press.
- Olson, D. Torrance, N. (1991) 'Introduction' in Olson, D. & Torrance, N. (Eds.). *Literacy and Orality* (pp. 11-27), New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Street, B. V. (1984) *Literacy in theory and practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Perspectives de revitalisation d'une langue en danger : le cas du Nyemnyem

PHILIPPE MUTAKA & LEOPOLDINE VOUTSA

Un des impacts négatifs de la mondialisation sur le continent africain est sans nul doute celui de pousser beaucoup de langues et de cultures sur la voie de la disparition. Un examen des neuf critères de l'UNESCO⁵ sur le statut des langues africaines relatif au degré de leur avancement sur la voie de la disparition montrerait que la plupart de ces langues sont en fait en danger et qu'il y a un besoin urgent pour leur revitalisation si l'on prend au sérieux l'idée selon laquelle chaque langue est le véhicule d'une culture et que sa disparition équivaut à la perte d'un héritage intangible pour l'humanité. Cet article trouve son origine dans un survol des langues en danger par une équipe de linguistes dans l'escarpement de l'Adamawa au Cameroun. Trois membres de cette équipe parlent des langues africaines et ils ont estimé que la situation du Vute-Banyo et du Nyemnyem est semblable à celle de nombreuses langues africaines. Il nous est apparu urgent d'écrire un article général visant à encourager la revitalisation des langues africaines dont les résultats pourraient inspirer d'autres chercheurs de mettre sur pied les voies et moyens pour la revitalisation de ces langues par leurs locuteurs sur le continent africain. En effet, les résultats statistiques de notre questionnaire d'enquête auprès des locuteurs de ces langues prouvent suffisamment que ceux-ci aiment bien leurs langues et leurs cultures. Il est donc évident que s'il leur était donné l'occasion de les revitaliser, ils le feraient. Notre objectif est d'arriver à sensibiliser les différents gouvernements au sujet de la nécessité de préserver l'écodiversité des langues, selon les vœux de l'UNESCO (UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages 2003). Cela créerait la meilleure atmosphère pour revitaliser ces langues ainsi que les aspects positifs de leurs cultures. L'article sera organisé ainsi qu'il suit. Dans une première partie, nous allons spécifier les objectifs généraux qu'une perspective de revitalisation d'une langue en danger doit essayer d'atteindre. Dans la seconde partie, nous passerons en revue les stratégies mises en œuvre pour l'apprentissage des langues et qui ne sont pas appropriées pour les langues en danger. Dans la troisième partie, nous donnerons nos suggestions pour la revitalisation des langues en danger en général, et dans la quatrième partie, nous focaliserons nos suggestions sur les perspectives de revitalisation de la langue nyemnyem comme un échantillon des langues africaines en danger.

I. Objectifs généraux pour la revitalisation d'une langue en danger.

De prime abord, nous aimerions rappeler que les langues africaines en général et les langues en danger d'extinction en particulier évoluent dans un contexte sociopolitique qui ne favorise pas leur expansion. La raison première est que ce sont les langues héritées de la colonisation qui servent souvent de langues officielles et par conséquent, ce sont elles qui jouissent du financement de nos différents gouvernements pour leur apprentissage. Dans un pays comme le Cameroun, demander au gouvernement de mobiliser des fonds pour une

revitalisation accélérée des langues africaines ou des langues en danger serait perçu comme une provocation car leur usage n'est pas considéré comme une priorité aux yeux des décideurs. D'aucuns y verraient d'ailleurs une manière inavouée de ramener le tribalisme par la petite porte sur la scène politique. Pourtant, le souci de préserver l'écodiversité des langues exige que nos langues africaines soient revitalisées, et en particulier les langues en danger car leur extinction serait une perte pour l'humanité. Toute langue est en effet un véhicule de la culture et elle charrie avec elle toutes les connaissances que ses locuteurs ont pu perfectionner au fil du temps pour leur survie en tant que communauté humaine et aussi pour le maintien de l'écosystème de leur sol.

Si nous voulons revitaliser une langue en danger, il est important de ne pas poursuivre la voie qui a conduit à faire d'elle une langue en danger. Il est important de concevoir de nouveaux objectifs qui soient acceptables pour ses locuteurs mais aussi pour les gouvernants politiques en sorte que leur revitalisation ne soit pas considérée comme une manière de ramener le tribalisme dans un pays.

Avant de fixer les objectifs, il est important de répertorier les besoins que servent ces langues africaines en général, et les langues en danger en particulier. Puisque la revitalisation de la langue poursuivra forcément des voies différentes pour les adultes et pour les enfants, dans la mesure du possible, nous tenons à signaler dans notre répertoire des besoins, ce qui différencie ces deux groupes de locuteurs.

A quoi donc servent nos langues africaines dans le climat politique actuel ?

Notons d'abord que ces langues sont utilisées le plus souvent dans les situations informelles, particulièrement dans des endroits où les différents allocutaires partagent la même langue. C'est ainsi que dans nos villages où les langues véhiculaires jouissent d'une maîtrise plus ou moins passive, les langues africaines sont le plus utilisées. Dans les villes, la situation est beaucoup plus complexe. L'utilisation de la langue africaine sera une langue véhiculaire si les intervenants parlent des langues maternelles différentes et elle peut être la langue maternelle si les intervenants connaissent tous deux cette langue. Examinons d'abord des cas de figure où les langues africaines sont utilisées dans des centres urbains par les enfants.

- a. A l'école, les enfants ont plus de chances de parler les langues africaines, dont leurs langues maternelles, en dehors des salles de classe. En général, la situation en classe est considérée comme formelle. Les enfants ne doivent pas faire du bruit et il leur faut parler dans les langues officielles qui, pour le Cameroun, sont le français ou l'anglais. Cependant, pendant la récréation, il arrive aux enfants de parler les langues maternelles ou les langues véhiculaires lorsqu'ils savent qu'il n'y a pas un enseignant qui les surveille.
- b. En famille, les enfants parlent souvent la langue véhiculaire entre eux. Ils parleront souvent la langue africaine à leurs parents dans la mesure où ceux-ci les y encouragent. C'est ainsi que la plupart des enfants ont tendance à connaître souvent la langue de leur mère si celle-ci l'utilise

souvent lorsqu'elle s'adresse à eux. Au cas où les parents parlent des langues différentes, les enfants apprendront aussi la langue de leur père si leur mère a fait des efforts pour l'apprendre.

- c. Dans les lieux publics comme le marché, sur la rue à la sortie de l'école, dans les cours de récréation à la maison, les enfants utilisent aussi les langues africaines qui peuvent être une langue véhiculaire s'ils ne partagent pas la même langue maternelle, ou alors une langue maternelle, si tous la partagent en commun.
- d. Pour autant que les enfants maîtrisent une langue africaine mieux que la langue officielle, ils auront tendance à l'utiliser dans des situations d'intimité. Ils prennent d'ailleurs plaisir à la parler lorsqu'ils se chuchotent des secrets à l'oreille.

Notez que dans tous ces cas de figure, la langue maternelle, qui est ici la langue en danger, est toujours défavorisée. C'est une langue qui sera parlée au cas où les enfants ne peuvent pas parler la langue véhiculaire.

Au vu de ceci, les objectifs pour la revitalisation de la langue maternelle, en ayant les enfants comme cible, seront les suivants.

- a. Inciter les enfants à connaître leur langue maternelle. Puisque ce sont les parents qui sont les locuteurs de ces langues et qui sont appelés à la perpétuer en l'apprenant à leurs enfants, il faudra donc trouver des stratégies qui amènent les parents à vouloir parler leurs langues maternelles avec les enfants. Il faudra aussi arriver à créer auprès des enfants le besoin d'apprendre leur langue maternelle.
- b. Valoriser des éléments de la culture de la langue maternelle aux yeux des enfants et de la société de façon à ce que toute la communauté sente qu'elle gagne dans la revalorisation de ces langues. Nous songeons notamment à revaloriser certains jeux liés à la culture africaine que les enfants peuvent ainsi jouer pendant les récréations. Ceci suppose que les parents ou les autorités scolaires auront accepté au préalable l'objectif de pousser les enfants à parler la langue maternelle.

A présent, examinons le contexte de l'usage des langues maternelles pour les populations adultes.

- a. Dans les meetings politiques, très souvent, les politiciens emploient la langue africaine car ils sont sûrs que c'est par le biais de cette langue qu'ils peuvent mieux transmettre leur message et avoir plus de chance à ce que la population leur prête une attention soutenue.
- b. Les débits de boisson sont les endroits privilégiés où se rencontrent les hommes au village, et même dans les centres urbains. Puisque l'atmosphère y est souvent relaxe, si ces hommes viennent d'une même ethnie et qu'ils maîtrisent bien leur langue maternelle, il y a beaucoup de chances qu'ils la parlent. Ou alors, ils auront tendance à parler une langue véhiculaire dont ils sentent que son utilisation les rapprochent de manière plus intime.

- c. Quant aux femmes, elles auront tendance à utiliser la langue maternelle avec d'autres locuteurs de cette langue dans les situations informelles qui s'offrent. Au village, c'est par exemple aux abords de puits d'eau et aux champs. Notons d'ailleurs que ce sont de tels endroits que celles qui apprennent la langue maternelle de leurs époux fréquentent pour avoir l'occasion de l'apprendre plus facilement (Attia & Mutaka 2004). Dans les villes, c'est surtout lors des réunions sociales des associations auxquelles elles appartiennent. Il est vrai que les points essentiels à l'ordre du jour sont souvent traités dans les langues officielles, mais, dès que la situation devient plus informelle dans ces réunions, elles ont tendance à parler une langue africaine qui les rapproche. Au cas où elles maîtrisent parfaitement leur langue maternelle, elles auront tendance à l'utiliser dans leurs conversations.
- d. Les cours d'alphabétisation pour adultes offrent aussi un cadre idéal de parler la langue maternelle s'ils ont comme objectif principal de leur apprendre à lire et à écrire cette langue.
- e. Il existe un domaine formel dans lequel la langue maternelle est la plus utilisée : lors des cérémonies rituelles traditionnelles où les participants entrent en communion avec les ancêtres. Dans la plupart des communautés africaines, on croit que les ancêtres comprennent mieux les langues maternelles et sont allergiques aux langues importées car celles-ci sont à la base de la glottophagie des langues africaines ainsi que de leurs cultures.

Au vu de tous ces contextes d'usage pour les adultes, nous proposons les objectifs suivants pour la revitalisation d'une langue en danger.

- a. Inciter les adultes à lire des informations en langue maternelle. Notez que nous employons dans cette phrase le terme «adultes» et non «apprenants» parce que nous estimons que l'habitude de lire des informations en langue maternelle ne doit pas se limiter aux adultes qui prennent des cours d'alphabétisation. Etant donné que beaucoup d'adultes lettrés ont une préférence de lire les informations en langues officielles, c'est donc un véritable défi de trouver des informations qui vont accrocher un tel adulte et le pousser à les lire dans la langue maternelle.
- b. Inciter les adultes à être fiers de leur langues et de leurs cultures afin qu'ils soient motivés à parler ces langues avec leurs enfants pour assurer la transmission intergénérationnelle de ces langues.
- c. Inciter les adultes à communiquer des informations dans des langues maternelles soit par écrit ou oralement.
- d. Susciter l'intérêt des adultes pour leur langue maternelle en l'écoutant. Nous songeons notamment à l'exploitation des nouvelles techniques de l'information et de communication qui offrent la possibilité aux individus d'écouter des programmes en langues maternelles par radio ou

avec l'emploi de l'ordinateur dans la mesure où un tel logiciel peut être disponible.

Après avoir formulé ces objectifs, la question est de savoir comment assurer leur mise en œuvre de façon que l'objectif affiché, celui de revitaliser nos langues en danger, soit atteint. Pour les habitués de l'apprentissage des langues dans des situations formelles, l'on serait tenté de croire qu'une simple adaptation des cours des langues tels que dispensés pour l'apprentissage des langues officielles peut arriver à résoudre ce problème et à les revitaliser instantanément. Avant de proposer des stratégies adéquates, nous tenons à mettre le lecteur en garde sur les stratégies couramment utilisées pour l'apprentissage des langues officielles et qui ne sont pas appropriées pour les langues en danger dans le contexte africain.

II. Quelles stratégies d'apprentissage des langues faut-il éviter pour la revitalisation des langues en danger ?

Puisqu'il est établi que l'utilisation des langues maternelles se pratique surtout dans les contextes informels, il est souhaitable de mettre un accent particulier sur le caractère oral de ces langues. Ainsi, parmi les quatre skills de l'apprentissage des langues, à savoir, le parler, l'écoute, le lire et l'écrit, il faut surtout favoriser les deux premiers.

Dans la conception des stratégies de revitalisation des langues en danger, il est important de mettre en exergue les pratiques qui favorisent l'utilisation de ces langues et non les connaissances théoriques au sujet de ces langues. En d'autres termes, voici ce que nous suggérons d'éviter:

- a. la description de la grammaire d'une langue, à savoir la phonologie, la morphologie, la syntaxe et la sémantique d'une langue en danger doit être conçue comme un exercice académique devant préparer le terrain pour concevoir un système orthographique approprié ainsi que la production des textes devant permettre aux locuteurs d'une telle langue à disposer ou à constituer une documentation capable de renforcer leur désir d'utiliser leur langue de manière plus soutenue et régulière. Dans un cours de revitalisation d'une langue en danger, il ne s'agit donc pas d'apprendre aux locuteurs les schèmes tonals de leur langue, la structure syllabique de leurs langues, les phonèmes et allophones de leur langue, etc. Un tel exercice doit être réservé à une infime minorité qui serait tentée d'étudier ces langues. Cette minorité appartient aux groupes des linguistes formés à l'université ou des instructeurs d'alphabétisation qui sont convaincus de l'emploi de ces connaissances pour améliorer leur enseignement d'une langue maternelle.
- b. Au cas où l'apprentissage de ces langues a lieu dans des structures formelles comme les salles de classe, il est souhaitable d'éviter de traumatiser les apprenants par une discipline trop stricte. Dans les classes formelles, il y a un maître qui est détenteur de la connaissance et les élèves qui l'écoutent. Le maître est seul devant les élèves. Pour instaurer la discipline en classe, on exige des élèves de rester silencieux et de ne parler que quand l'enseignant leur pose une question et leur

demande de répondre. Cependant, nous souhaitons que pour l'apprentissage des langues maternelles, il soit permis aux élèves de s'asseoir parfois face à face de façon à favoriser le contexte de dialogue. Après que le maître ait introduit une notion de base, il peut ainsi demander aux élèves de s'asseoir par petits groupes et de pratiquer les skills qu'il vient d'introduire. Le comportement de l'enseignant sera de circuler parmi ces groupes en s'assurant qu'ils pratiquent bien les skills appris, et en cas de problème, qu'il leur vienne en aide. Une telle stratégie permet à la majorité des apprenants à pratiquer activement les skills du parler et de l'écoute pendant les heures de classe. Pour une description plus élaborée de l'emploi de ces stratégies d'apprentissage des langues, voir Mutaka et Attia (cet ouvrage).

- c. Au cas où ces cours de revitalisation d'une langue en danger sont donnés aux adultes, il ne faut pas que l'enseignant se comporte comme le détenteur des connaissances. Son rôle est plutôt d'aider ces adultes à obtenir une information dont ils ont besoin et qui peut les aider à améliorer leurs propres affaires. En effet, les adultes viennent en classe avec des connaissances déjà sophistiquées, et parfois, ils sont des véritables spécialistes dans leurs domaines d'activité. Lorsqu'ils se décident de prendre des cours d'alphabétisation, c'est qu'il y a des informations précises qu'ils veulent recevoir. Quitte à l'enseignant de les aider à les acquérir et de profiter de l'occasion pour demander à ces adultes de partager aussi leurs connaissances avec les autres membres de la communauté. Nous reviendrons sur la manière de mettre sur pied la stratégie d'obtenir des informations spécialisées des apprenants dans la troisième partie de ce chapitre.

Après cette mise en garde de mauvaises pratiques à éviter lors de l'apprentissage d'une langue en danger, venons-en aux stratégies à mettre sur pied pour revitaliser les langues en danger.

III. Stratégies de revitalisation des langues en danger.

Pour inciter les enfants à apprendre la langue maternelle :

- a. Il est important de sensibiliser les parents, les enseignants et les autorités institutionnelles ou gouvernementales d'autoriser l'emploi des langues maternelles dans des situations informelles. Ceci ferait partie d'une politique gouvernementale de favoriser l'écodiversité des langues. Après plusieurs décennies de cohabitation des langues maternelles avec les langues officielles dans les structures scolaires, les autorités ne devraient plus craindre que parler les langues maternelles dans les cours de jeux de l'école constituera un danger pour les langues officielles. Ce qu'il faut garantir est tout simplement de meilleures méthodes pour enseigner les langues officielles ainsi que les langues maternelles. L'ouvrage de Mutaka et Attia (en préparation) qui met en exergue l'importance de focaliser l'apprentissage des langues sur le développement socioéconomique des apprenants et de leurs communautés avec le truchement des langues officielles et maternelles

est bien indiquée pour réaliser un tel objectif. Nous tenons du reste à souligner un grand apport psychologique de la part des autorités s'ils permettent l'utilisation des langues maternelles dans les situations informelles. Une telle autorisation permettrait d'ailleurs aux élèves d'être fiers de parler leurs langues maternelles. Comme conséquence, ils se sentiront plus fiers de leurs cultures traditionnelles et pourront ainsi mieux contribuer à les promouvoir.

- b. Favoriser la communication des secrets en langues maternelles. Notez que c'est une pratique courante dans les communautés multilingues. Comme le rapportent Attia & Mutaka (2004), c'est une stratégie qu'emploient souvent les femmes pour apprendre la langue maternelle de leurs époux. Et pour les enfants qui ne connaissent pas leurs langues maternelles, c'est une stratégie qui les encourage à l'apprendre. Dans Attia & Mutaka (2004), il y a un exemple d'une fille qui a ainsi appris sa langue maternelle sur le tard, à douze ans environ, car elle avait remarqué que dans le nouveau milieu dans lequel elle est venue vivre, les gens se communiquaient leurs informations intimes dans les langues maternelles. Elle qui avait toujours pensé qu'elle était l'objet d'admiration d'autres enfants car elle parlait bien français s'est rendu compte que sa connaissance du français ne suffisait pas pour mieux vivre dans sa nouvelle communauté. Il fallait coûte que coûte apprendre sa langue maternelle. Cette motivation à parler sa langue maternelle l'a ainsi poussé à visiter plus souvent ses grands parents et à pratiquer la langue auprès d'eux.
- c. Encourager les parents à pratiquer ce que Christine Afola-Amey (communication personnelle) appelle la théorie de systématisation des langues⁶, en faisant en sorte que, de 1 à 3 ans, l'enfant soit exposé à la langue maternelle, et de 4 à 7ans, chacun des parents dans des mariages mixtes emploie sa langue maternelle pour parler à l'enfant car c'est au cours de cette période que l'enfant acquiert définitivement sa langue maternelle (voir aussi Afola-Amey Ufualè (2006). Des enfants issus des mariages mixtes pourraient ainsi connaître deux langues maternelles que parlent leurs parents. Comme le souligne Christine Afola, la responsabilité de transmettre la langue maternelle incombe surtout aux parents ; le gouvernement ne peut que jouer un rôle secondaire dans cet apprentissage.

Pour la revalorisation de la culture traditionnelle aux yeux des enfants :

- a. encourager les élèves à collecter des légendes, proverbes, devinettes, comptines, berceuses dans leurs langues, les traduire en langues officielles. Ceci peut être donné comme travail à domicile que les enseignants des langues peuvent donner aux élèves. Cela suppose que le gouvernement a donné son accord pour encourager les populations à mieux s'abreuver aux sources de leurs cultures pour mieux l'assimiler. Il serait souhaitable que l'enseignant des langues donne l'occasion aux élèves d'exposer oralement les résultats de leur recherche. Ceci

permettrait à toute la classe de réaliser que nos langues africaines recèlent des richesses appréciables qui restent encore inexplorées.

- b. Encourager les élèves ou les chercheurs à répertorier les jeux liés aux cultures traditionnelles. Il est possible que certains de ces jeux puissent intéresser les élèves et ils pourront parfois les jouer en utilisant les langues maternelles. Notez à ce sujet qu'une fois ces jeux répertoriés, des individus créatifs pourraient réussir à les adapter à la vie moderne et élargir ainsi le choix des jeux offerts aux enfants. Pour ne citer qu'un exemple de genres de jeux traditionnels qui intéresseraient les enfants modernes, prenons le cas des jeux de la culture Nande de la RDC. Il existe le saut à la corde que l'on peut jouer seul ou en groupe, le jeu de cache cache, le jeu à l'aveuglette, le jeu des billes, le jeu des noisettes, le jeu des trous percés sur une planche, etc. Revaloriser ces jeux serait une manière de pousser les enfants à s'imaginer le genre d'amusement auxquels leurs ancêtres se livraient lorsqu'ils étaient encore jeunes. Jouer à ces jeux serait une motivation supplémentaire pour eux de parler la langue maternelle pendant qu'ils les pratiquent.
- c. Former des clubs basés sur l'apprentissage des langues maternelles. Au sein de tels clubs, les enfants trouveraient l'occasion de pratiquer le parler et l'écoute de la langue maternelle. Dans ces clubs, on pourrait parfois jouer de la musique traditionnelle de la langue maternelle, une manière de familiariser l'enfant avec les éléments culturels de cette langue.
- d. Au cas où il existerait un comité de langue dont l'objectif est d'œuvrer au développement de cette langue, il faudrait encourager les enfants à s'impliquer plus activement dans ces comités, en écrivant des articles pour le journal de ce comité s'il en existe.
- e. On peut aussi demander aux enfants de traduire des textes d'alphabétisation en langues locales et les encourager à discuter ces textes avec leurs parents ou les locuteurs adultes de cette langue susceptibles de bénéficier du contenu de tels textes. Les exemples de tels textes se trouvent dans l'annexe de Mutaka et Attia (en préparation).

Pour inciter les adultes à lire des informations en langues maternelles

- a. favoriser la création des structures d'alphabétisation. L'on peut s'attendre à ce que de telles structures ne connaissent pas nécessairement un grand engouement auprès des adultes, vu l'idée que l'on se fait des cours d'alphabétisation. En effet, l'alphabétisation s'est souvent limitée à apprendre à lire et à écrire pour les populations analphabètes. Mais si le gouvernement mène une campagne de publicité en faveur des cours d'alphabétisation en faisant prévaloir l'idée que le contenu des cours d'alphabétisation ne se limite plus seulement à l'apprentissage de la lecture et de l'écriture en langues maternelles, mais qu'il s'adresse beaucoup plus aux adultes lettrés qui veulent approfondir les éléments de leur culture, il y a lieu d'espérer que les gens seraient plus intéressés à ces centres d'alphabétisation. Soit le gouvernement, soit les promoteurs de ces centres d'alphabétisation s'efforceraient de

les doter d'un matériel de sensibilisation capable d'attirer une plus grande clientèle. Avec l'avènement de l'âge d'internet, il est certain que des sites d'internet offrant du matériel de sensibilisation relatif à la langue et à la culture des locuteurs de cette langue seraient créés.

- b. Apprendre l'orthographe de la langue maternelle. La conception de l'orthographe de la langue serait élaborée par des linguistes en collaboration avec les leaders d'opinion de ces langues pour s'assurer que cette orthographe sera acceptée par la population. Nous souhaitons que l'orthographe soit la plus pratique possible. Comme la population cible n'est pas nécessairement lettrée en linguistique, il faut éviter d'employer des symboles linguistiques qu'il serait difficile d'interpréter. Une telle orthographe doit servir d'outil d'apprentissage et de lecture de la langue pour une population qui parle déjà cette langue. Pour ceux qui ne la parlent pas et qui veulent l'apprendre, ils pourront toujours bénéficier de cette orthographe car, tant que le cours d'apprentissage de ces langues est surtout basé sur l'oral, ils arriveront toujours à reconnaître les mots qui ne sont pas nécessairement transcrits avec l'utilisation des caractères linguistiques.
- c. Mettre à leur disposition des textes écrits en langues maternelles et qui répondent réellement à leurs besoins. Ces textes peuvent paraître régulièrement dans un journal local dans lequel on publie par exemple des annonces de naissance et de décès, des événements susceptibles d'intéresser les locuteurs de cette langue. Pour ce genre de journal, nous suggérons qu'il ne soit pas long et que les éditeurs acceptent d'y mêler des articles écrits dans une langue officielle que maîtrisent les locuteurs de la langue maternelle. Ce serait une manière d'inciter ceux parmi eux qui ne savent pas lire dans la langue maternelle à s'intéresser à ce journal. Nous souhaitons ardemment que les autres textes soient du genre de ceux publiés dans Mutaka & Attia (en préparation) en annexe ainsi que celui sur la promotion d'une culture de la paix.⁷
- d. Elaborer un dictionnaire bilingue qui puisse aider les locuteurs à opérer une transition facile entre la langue maternelle et la langue officielle. Pour le Cameroun, cette langue est le français ou l'anglais suivant qu'on est dans une zone francophone ou anglophone. Une stratégie facile à utiliser pour la collecte des données d'un tel dictionnaire est celle suggérée dans Ronald Moe (2005).⁸ Elle se résume en ceci : le linguiste conçoit un certain nombre de champs sémantiques. Il réunit ses locuteurs en plusieurs groupes et leur fait produire les différents mots qui correspondent à ces champs sémantiques. A la fin du travail, il devra faire un travail d'organisation du matériel, sa transcription avec les exemples appropriés pour l'utilisation de certains mots. C'est un travail qui doit se faire en étroite collaboration avec la population qui parle la langue.

Pour inciter les parents à parler leur langue maternelle avec leurs enfants :

- a. recevoir un encouragement de la part des autorités à pousser les parents à apprendre leur langue aux enfants. En effet, suite aux méfaits de la colonisation, nombreux parents ont longtemps considéré leur propre langue comme un élément rétrograde à telle enseigne qu'ils refusent de parler cette langue à leurs enfants. Si nous prenons l'exemple de la culture Nande de la RDC, le Kinande a été longtemps presque confiné dans les villages. En ville, notamment à Butembo et à Beni, les populations parlent plutôt la langue véhiculaire de la province qui est le Swahili. Pourtant, à y voir de plus près, c'est plutôt un Swahili vicié avec un accent Kinande et beaucoup de mots d'emprunt Kinande. Devant les événements catastrophiques liés à la guerre qui ont endeuillé la région des Wanande, l'évêque de Butembo-Beni a eu l'occasion de rappeler à plusieurs reprises aux chrétiens de l'église catholique l'importance d'utiliser le Kinande⁹ d'une manière plus soutenue. Il leur a rappelé que la guerre dans la région des Wanande est en partie due au fait que les parents ont délaissé leurs responsabilités en croyant que les enfants pouvaient recevoir leur éducation des étrangers. Il a insisté sur l'importance du Kinande comme étant le véhicule de la culture Nande et que c'était un devoir sacré pour les parents d'aider ces enfants à acquérir cette culture. Selon ses explications, les enfants sauront grandir avec les bonnes habitudes s'ils les ont acquises des parents. Or, une de ces bonnes habitudes est l'apprentissage de la langue maternelle avec ce qu'elle véhicule comme culture. Il serait souhaitable que nos gouvernements africains ainsi que les autorités religieuses emboîtent le pas à l'évêque de Butembo-Beni pour encourager les parents à apprendre désormais leur langue à leurs enfants.
- b. Instaurer l'habitude d'utiliser la langue maternelle pour toute information susceptible d'être un secret. Comme nous l'avons souligné plus haut, c'est une stratégie qui pousse les femmes dont les maris parlent une langue différente de la leur à apprendre la langue maternelle de ceux-ci. C'est en effet une stratégie qui peut facilement réussir dans une société multilingue car elle pousserait chaque enfant à se sentir plus lié à son groupe en cas de danger. Dans la ville de Kinshasa, nous savons que les troubles ont éveillé la conscience des habitants de cette capitale cosmopolite congolaise à savoir qu'il faut désormais savoir parler sa langue maternelle. Cela a poussé beaucoup d'enfants à s'inscrire dans des cours de langue maternelle. Il serait souhaitable que nos autorités administratives utilisent cette information pour motiver les parents à transmettre leur langue ainsi que leur culture à leurs enfants.
- c. Avoir l'habitude de fredonner des chansons en langue maternelle car cela excite l'attention des enfants. Comme l'ont souligné Attia & Mutaka (2004), une stratégie qu'utilisent certains apprenants est de mémoriser les chansons de la langue africaine qu'ils désirent apprendre. Une fois qu'ils connaissent les mots, ils veulent connaître leur signification, et le sens complet de la chanson. Ils profitent de toute occasion qui leur est offerte de balbutier des mots dans cette langue nouvelle et, finalement, ils arrivent à la parler. C'est une stratégie que les

parents devraient avoir à l'esprit car elle peut aider leurs enfants à apprendre leur langue maternelle. Des chansons qui peuvent assurément attirer l'attention des enfants sont celles qui se trouvent dans des contes. Ce serait d'ailleurs une manière de restaurer ce qui faisait la joie des enfants avant les méfaits de la colonisation lorsqu'ils devaient s'asseoir autour du feu et écouter ces contes et légendes. Nous sommes du reste convaincus qu'il y a lieu de ressusciter l'engouement pour ces contes. Mutaka, lors de son séjour d'études aux Etats-Unis, a trouvé qu'il y avait des conteurs professionnels à la radio qui captivaient l'attention des auditeurs. La technologie de l'information et de la communication permet désormais l'enregistrement de tels contes. Quitte à les jouer à la maison avec les commentaires des parents ou des grands parents qui peuvent en connaître la signification. Une autre manière de vulgariser ces contes et légendes serait dans les cours d'alphabétisation comme nous l'avons signalé plus haut.

Pour inciter les adultes à communiquer des informations en langues maternelles :

- a. Retracer les généalogies des familles. Comme tout individu aimerait toujours connaître son origine, il serait intéressant que les adultes prennent l'habitude d'expliquer soit oralement ou par écrit les généalogies familiales à leur progéniture. Avec l'emploi des ordinateurs, il est possible que certaines familles veuillent saisir ces généalogies et les garder comme des documents importants pour leur progéniture.
- b. Pendant les cours d'alphabétisation pour adultes, prévoir des séances où l'on débat des problèmes réels de la société. Puisque les participants viennent dans ces cours en sachant qu'ils veulent promouvoir leur langue maternelle, ils accepteront, dans la mesure du possible, de tenir leurs conversations dans cette langue maternelle. Ainsi, au lieu que le domaine d'utilisation ne soit limité à l'informel, les gens pourront progressivement étendre son champ d'utilisation à des contextes plus formels tels que des débats publics sur la politique et sur la religion.
- c. Une autre suggestion pour les cours d'alphabétisation est d'encourager les participants à développer un sujet pour lequel ils sont spécialistes ou alors un sujet sur lesquels ils peuvent obtenir des informations fiables et susceptibles d'intéresser les gens de leur ethnie. Notre souhait est que de tels sujets aient surtout trait au développement économique, politique ou culturel de leur communauté. Eventuellement, si la communauté possède un journal dans la langue maternelle, des articles issus de tels sujets pourraient y être publiés. Comme souligné précédemment, il n'est pas nécessaire que tous les articles d'un tel journal soient en langue maternelle. Il serait d'ailleurs plus souhaitable d'y inclure des articles écrits dans les langues officielles de façon à attirer aussi les non locuteurs de cette langue maternelle et qui souhaiteraient l'apprendre.
- d. Au marché, encourager les locuteurs des langues maternelles à négocier les prix en utilisant ces langues et jouir des prix préférentiels. Notez que

beaucoup de communautés de la ville de Yaounde pratiquent déjà cette stratégie. Il y a un prix pour les locuteurs de la langue maternelle et un autre prix pour les étrangers.

Pour susciter de l'engouement pour les langues maternelles :

- a. favoriser la création des radios communautaires et prévoir des programmes en langues maternelles qui sont destinées aux populations locales. Puisque dans une région, chaque langue maternelle ne peut pas avoir sa radio, la réglementation de temps d'antenne destiné à chaque communauté pourrait être assurée par les pouvoirs publics. Ce serait une manière indirecte pour le gouvernement d'encourager les populations à utiliser beaucoup plus leurs langues maternelles.
- b. Commercialiser des enregistrements des éléments culturels de la langue tels que les proverbes, les légendes, les mythes, les devinettes, etc. Certains de ces enregistrements pourraient contenir des chansons ou des textes de plaisanterie destinés à détendre tout simplement l'auditeur.
- c. Nous tenons à signaler qu'avec le progrès de la technologie de l'information et de la communication, il deviendra de plus en plus aisé d'obtenir une traduction simultanée des textes électroniques. Nous souhaitons que les linguistes spécialistes des langues maternelles s'appliquent à mettre cet outil à la disposition des apprenants de ces langues maternelles. Cela pourra étendre le domaine d'utilisation de ces langues dans la mesure où les locuteurs pourraient maintenant écouter dans leurs propres langues des ouvrages écrits dans des langues étrangères (Adegbola 2004).

Au cas où certains pays sont déjà psychologiquement préparés à introduire l'enseignement des langues Africaines dans leur système éducatif, les suggestions suivantes de Ohiri-Aniche (2004) telles que citées dans Attia (2006) seraient d'une certaine utilité:

- Faire de la connaissance de la première langue (la langue maternelle) une condition pour obtenir le certificat de fin d'études primaires.
- Même si le passé des enfants venant de milieux hétérogènes ne permet pas qu'on enseigne les langues maternelles à l'école, il serait souhaitable de veiller à ce que les programmes augmentent le volet culturel des langues africaines à travers chansons, danses, scénettes, travaux d'artisanat, visites et expositions.
- Faire de la connaissance des langues maternelles un devoir dans certains domaines : par exemple, en faire un cours obligatoire à tous les niveaux de l'enseignement ; en faire un préalable lors de l'admission aux postes des responsabilités de l'enseignement et à l'emploi aussi bien dans le privé que dans le public ; en faire un préalable pour l'obtention d'une attestation de lieu de naissance, de citoyenneté ou pour obtenir un passeport.

IV. Perspectives de revitalisation de la langue Nyemnyem

Forts de toutes les directives sur la manière de revitaliser une langue en danger développées dans la section précédente, venons-en maintenant aux suggestions qui concernent spécifiquement la langue Nyemnyem. Nous espérons que d'autres chercheurs intéressés à la revitalisation des langues africaines examineront minutieusement la situation sociopolitique de ces langues afin de déterminer les meilleures stratégies qui pourront porter des fruits et qui s'inspirent des stratégies évoquées dans la section précédente.

Avant de donner une quelconque suggestion, rappelons l'importance de focaliser sur l'oral dans toute démarche de revitalisation d'une langue en danger dans le contexte africain. Ainsi que nous l'avons souligné plus haut, nos langues maternelles se parlent surtout dans des situations informelles. C'est donc dans ce cadre qu'il faut envisager la revitalisation de ces langues. Il serait extrêmement imprudent de penser que, pour revitaliser ces langues, il faut concevoir des leçons d'enseignement de langues maternelles qui seraient dispensées comme pour l'enseignement des langues officielles telles que le français et l'anglais dans les salles de classe au Cameroun. Les suggestions de ce chapitre se démarquent donc nettement de celles élaborées dans Tadjieu, Sadembouo et Mba (2004) qui présupposent que les langues africaines seront mises au programme, à cause des nouvelles lois sur l'éducation et qu'il faudra donc les enseigner comme on enseigne l'anglais, le français, voir même les mathématiques.

Il est impératif de rappeler pour la langue Nyemnyem que la majorité de la population est analphabète en français ou en anglais. Dans le cadre d'un enseignement formel qui exigerait que les langues africaines soient enseignées comme les langues officielles comme le préconisent Tadjieu et al. (2004), le défi serait donc double : d'un côté, il faudra apprendre les langues officielles aux élèves et de l'autre côté leur apprendre à lire et à écrire leurs langues maternelles. Bien sûr, dans un avenir lointain, c'est l'idéal à atteindre.¹⁰ Mais cet idéal ne peut être conçu comme un besoin urgent, d'autant plus qu'il y a beaucoup d'embûches que notre équipe a relevé pour un bon fonctionnement des enseignements dans cette contrée de Galim.

Au sujet de ces embûches, nous avons relevé par exemple que le courant électrique est quasi inexistant, elle qui permettrait de faire fonctionner les appareils qui aideraient à l'apprentissage des langues. C'est ainsi qu'il nous a été impossible de trouver un photocopieuse ou un scanner dans cette contrée. Les enseignants des langues évoluent donc dans une situation très difficile car ils se butent au manque de matériel adéquat. Plus haut, nous avons aussi relevé la rareté des véhicules dans cette contrée à cause de son enclavement. C'est donc un véritable parcours de combattant pour un enseignant des langues qui s'investirait à aller chercher la documentation dans la capitale provinciale de Ngaoundere qui se trouve à 400km de Galim. Tibati, qui est la ville la plus proche de Galim, connaît également un problème de communication à cause du mauvais état de la route qui la relie à la capitale Yaounde. Toutes ces embûches qui sont donc d'ordre écologique expliquent pourquoi l'enseignement des langues à Galim

a des chances de réussir lorsqu'il est basé sur l'oral. Depuis des siècles immémoriaux, la population a toujours su maintenir sa langue dans un contexte d'oralité. Nos suggestions vont donc aller dans le sens de renforcer cette oralité à la lumière de ce que nos connaissances actuelles, en tant que linguistes et enseignants des langues, nous permettent de savoir comment améliorer l'enseignement d'une langue maternelle.

Comme nous l'avons aussi souligné plus haut, les Nyemnyem sont majoritairement islamisés. Cela veut dire qu'ils parlent Fulfulde et que leurs enfants fréquentent les écoles coraniques où ils apprennent à lire et à écrire l'arabe. Selon les informations obtenues des locuteurs Nyemnyem non islamisés, les maîtres Fulfulde ont fait croire que la langue Nyemnyem était une langue de Satan et qu'il ne fallait pas la parler à la mosquée. C'est pourquoi, les prières officielles sont déclamées en arabe et les prières personnelles sont surtout faites en fulfulde.

Une autre conséquence de cette islamisation outrée est que les Nyemnyem avaient souvent évité les écoles confessionnelles, catholiques ou protestantes, parce que leurs maîtres voyaient à travers ces écoles une manière de les détourner de leur foi musulmane. Pour eux, la religion musulmane était la seule religion acceptée par Dieu et que c'est par son biais que les individus pouvaient espérer à une promotion sociale. Ce mythe était renforcé par le fait que le président de la République du Cameroun était lui-même de souche Fulfulde.

Cependant, cette conception de la vie a commencé à changer. Depuis que le président n'est plus Fulfulde, ils ont compris que la langue fulfulde ou les écoles coraniques ne sont plus les seuls à assurer leur promotion sociale. C'est pourquoi les parents Nyemnyem envoient de plus en plus leurs enfants à l'école. Pour cette nouvelle catégorie d'enfants qui veulent s'insérer dans le système éducatif du Cameroun, le livre de Tadadjeu et al. (2004) reste d'actualité. Leur apprentissage du français et de l'anglais se poursuit déjà dans ce système éducatif. Nous avons par exemple été éblouis par deux adolescentes âgées de treize ans qui parlaient parfaitement le français et qui nous ont confié qu'ils l'ont appris à l'école.

Quelles sont à présent les stratégies basées sur l'oralité capables de mieux revitaliser la langue Nyemnyem ?

Le premier atout est l'organisation même de la société Nyemnyem qui est dirigée par un chef, le lamido, entouré des notables qui sont des véritables ministres prêts à résoudre tout problème auquel leur société est confrontée. Or, nous avons trouvé en ce lamido de Galim un homme très sensible au développement de sa contrée. C'est lui qui nous a confié ses documents personnels sur la langue Nyemyem et il nous a révélé que lorsqu'il aura du temps, il aimerait lui-même organiser ces documents de façon à pouvoir les mettre à la disposition de ses administrés. C'est donc un homme ouvert aux nouvelles idées. C'est pourquoi, notre première suggestion est de le sensibiliser du bien fondé de notre démarche de faire que la population Nyemnyem s'intéresse dorénavant beaucoup plus à leur culture traditionnelle et à leur langue. Nous sommes convaincus qu'il acceptera cette proposition de bon cœur d'autant plus qu'il nous a confié que sa mère est

Nyemnyem et qu'il a surtout vécu avec ses oncles Nyemnyem dans son enfance.

Nous sommes confiants que cette démarche pourra porter des fruits car, lors de notre enquête préliminaire dans la ville de Banyo, nous nous sommes rendu compte que les Vute de Banyo sont maintenant intéressés à leur culture parce que le lamido a demandé à sa population de s'enraciner plus dans sa culture. C'est ainsi qu'à Banyo, les locuteurs qui se faisaient passer pour des Fulfulde déclarent maintenant qu'ils sont Vute et qu'ils veulent approfondir leur culture Vute.

Un deuxième atout est l'existence d'un centre d'alphabétisation à Galim tenu par des missionnaires protestants. Il faudra voir dans quelle mesure on peut renforcer ce centre et faire en sorte que la population musulmane puisse aussi le fréquenter.

Un troisième atout est le fait que les enfants suivent déjà l'école coranique et qu'ils apprennent à lire l'arabe. L'on peut exploiter cet atout pour briser le mythe qui consiste à croire que c'est par l'arabe ou le fulfulde que l'on peut s'adresser à Dieu. Le lamido de Banyo nous a fait savoir que, pour sensibiliser les gens contre la pandémie du sida, il a lui-même traduit certains dépliants en fulfulde en employant les caractères arabes. C'est une démarche qui a ébloui ses lecteurs lettrés en arabe. Ils pouvaient maintenant lire le fulfulde avec les caractères arabes. Nous imaginons qu'une démarche similaire serait la bienvenue si, au lieu d'employer le fulfulde, on utilise le nyemnyem avec les caractères arabes.

La grande démarche serait bien sûr de récolter une documentation appropriée sur la culture Nyemnyem. Une fois récoltée, il faudra l'écrire, donner une copie au lamido et, à travers lui, faire en sorte que la population ait accès à cette documentation. Ce serait une manière de remonter le sentiment d'amour en soi du peuple Nyemnyem à qui l'on a longtemps fait croire que leur langue et leur culture n'avaient pas de valeur. Nous savons que les Nyemnyem étaient des grands guerriers, qu'ils maîtrisaient les tactiques de la guerre qu'ils combinaient avec la connaissance de l'environnement pour savoir par exemple quand ne pas aller en guerre et quand combattre l'ennemi. Il y a évidemment cette vaste connaissance des plantes médicinales qui est tombée de plus en plus dans les oubliettes et qu'il faut documenter. C'est aussi le cas de leurs mythes, légendes, proverbes, chants, cérémonies rituelles, berceuses, etc. Notre souhait est de faire de ce vaste champ d'investigation l'objet de notre prochain travail scientifique de niveau doctoral.

Bien que nous ayons souligné la suprématie de l'oralité dans les stratégies de revitalisation d'une langue en danger, il est tout de même nécessaire qu'une infime partie de la population qui s'intéresse à la langue soit formée à la lecture et à l'écriture de cette langue. C'est elle qui sera chargée de traduire ou d'interpréter les textes écrits sur les Nyemnyem en langues étrangères pour le public Nyemnyem. L'organisation de la société Nyemnyem rend cette tâche facile dans la mesure où le lamido à l'aide de ses notables peut désigner ceux qui, parmi la population Nyemnyem, peuvent subir cette formation. La porte resterait bien sûr grandement ouverte pour

les individus qui veulent aussi apprendre le système d'écriture et de lecture en langue nyemnyem. Ils aideront peu à peu la population Nyemnyem à mieux apprécier leur culture et à contribuer des écrits capables de promouvoir la langue et la culture Nyemnyem.

C'est au vu d'une telle perspective que notre groupe de recherche souhaiterait examiner les documents écrits en langue Nyemnyem et faire des propositions concrètes sur l'orthographe de la langue qui s'adresserait à un public Nyemnyem qui maîtrise déjà oralement la langue. Les éventuels détracteurs de notre démarche doivent reconnaître qu'un document écrit pour les linguistes de formation ou les non locuteurs de la langue doit être forcément différente d'un document qui cible les locuteurs natifs de la langue. Pour un tel document, il n'est pas nécessaire d'inclure tous les signes diacritiques. Comme dit précédemment, il n'est pas nécessaire de s'attarder à l'apprentissage des schèmes tonals dans la langue car les locuteurs les connaissent intuitivement. Il reste cependant nécessaire que les linguistes s'attellent à déterminer le système orthographique qui serait facile pour ces locuteurs de la langue.

Notez par ailleurs que si l'on parvient à s'assurer l'adhésion du lamido pour la mise en pratique de toutes ces stratégies pour la revitalisation de la langue maternelle, il sera plus facile d'ouvrir des centres d'alphabétisation dans les quartiers qui auront pour objectif d'appuyer la démarche de la population à s'enraciner dans sa culture et à développer sa langue mais aussi, à poursuivre les objectifs d'une alphabétisation fonctionnelle dont la principale préoccupation est d'aider les populations à poursuivre leur développement tant économique que moral, social et culturel. La remarque du personnage SJ dans l'article de Tadadjeu (2005) doit rester un leitmotiv pour tout africain qui aspire au développement de sa communauté. Celui-ci s'exclamait ainsi : quel bonheur ce serait d'avoir un texte en français et en Yemba (langue maternelle de SJ) pour la manière de produire le miel. Je ne serai plus obligé de répéter les mêmes explications aux paysans car, à la lecture de ce document, ils comprendraient directement le processus pour produire le miel.

En conclusion, pour une revitalisation d'une langue maternelle en danger telle que le nyemnyem, il est impératif de re-instaurer la confiance de ses locuteurs pour qu'ils se sentent fiers de la parler. Il faut en outre éviter de l'enseigner comme une langue officielle, étant donné que son champ d'utilisation reste surtout dans le domaine de l'informel. Il est cependant du devoir des chercheurs en langues africaines tels que les linguistes, les anthropologues et les sociologues, de recueillir les éléments de sa culture tels que les légendes, les mythes, les proverbes, les devinettes, les berceuses, les chants et danses traditionnels, les rituels des cérémonies traditionnelles, les connaissances sur les plantes médicinales, afin de constituer une documentation sur la langue qui pourra servir de tremplin pour ses locuteurs de continuer son développement. Les linguistes sont aussi appelés à concevoir une orthographe appropriée pour ses locuteurs, l'enseigner à une élite Nyemnyem qui aidera à la vulgariser progressivement afin de préparer ses locuteurs à une culture de lecture et de l'écriture qui, pour les langues de

grande communication, s'est avérée un instrument précieux pour le développement d'une langue. L'autre document de base que les linguistes sont appelés à élaborer est un dictionnaire bilingue, de préférence nyemnyem-français avec un index français -nyemnyem ou nyemnyem-anglais avec un index anglais-nyemnyem qui servirait à la population Nyemnyem d'un outil d'apprentissage de la langue française ou anglaise, qui sont les langues d'ouverture au monde extérieur de la région de Galim-Tignère située dans la zone francophone du pays.

Note

⁵ Ces critères sont: (a) la transmission intergénérationnelle de la langue, (b) le nombre absolu des locuteurs, (c) la proportion des locuteurs par rapport à la population entière, (d) les changements dans les domaines de l'usage de la langue, (e) les adaptations aux nouveaux domaines et aux médias, (f) le matériel pour l'éducation dans la langue et pour l'alphabétisation, (g) la politique linguistique du gouvernement relatif au statut et à l'emploi de ces langues, (h) l'attitude des membres de la communauté envers leur propre langue, (i) la quantité et la qualité de la documentation.

⁶ Sa théorie de "systématisation des langues" est une qui consiste à choisir délibérément une ou deux langues qui seront parlées systématiquement à l'enfant par deux personnes différentes dans un couple ou ailleurs, de préférence à partir de un à trois ans, de un à sept ans ou de un à quatorze ans, dans toutes les circonstances. Quand l'enfant se dirige vers le père ou vers la mère, il ne s'adresse à lui ou à elle que dans cette langue à la maison ou partout ailleurs. Pour justifier cette approche, elle s'appuie sur l'argument de Lenneberg (1967) selon lequel, de un à trois ans, le cerveau jouit d'une grande plasticité qui permet à l'enfant d'acquérir et de garder pour toujours (sauf en cas d'atteinte d'une maladie cervicale quelconque) toutes les structures de sa ou de ses langues de l'enfance. Par ailleurs, de un à trois ans se mettent en place dans la tête de l'enfant tous les concepts linguistiques qui lui permettent plus tard d'acquérir harmonieusement toutes les autres langues étrangères (Klein 1989).

⁷ Notez par ailleurs qu'il y a des langues africaines qui peuvent ne pas paraître comme des langues en danger selon les neuf critères de l'UNESCO mais dont certains aspects de la langue et de la culture sont en voie de disparition et qui appellent ainsi à un besoin urgent de préservation. Un exemple concret concerne la connaissance sur les plantes médicinales dans de nombreux pays africains. Suite à l'emploi de la médecine moderne, cette connaissance tend de plus en plus à disparaître. Notre souhait est que la préservation de tels aspects qui sont en danger pour une langue non en danger puissent aussi bénéficier des fonds disponibles pour la préservation de l'héritage intangible pour l'humanité.

⁸ Une copie de la liste des domaines sémantiques et du matériel y afférent sont disponibles auprès de l'auteur à l'adresse électronique suivante: ron_moe@sil.org.

⁹ Ce message de Monseigneur Melchisedech Paluku Sikuli figure dans la préface au dictionnaire Kinande-français de Kavutirwaki et Mutaka (2005).

¹⁰ A notre avis, la raison pour laquelle nos gouvernements traînent les pieds pour mettre en application le « Language Plan of Action for Africa » (OAU resolution 1987) ou les différentes suggestions de Neville Alexander (2005a,b) selon lesquelles il faut que les enseignements se fassent dans les langues africaines est que ces propositions n'ont pas prévu que de tels enseignements ne pourront se matérialiser qu'après une conversion de la mentalité des africains à pouvoir regagner de l'estime personnelle en leurs langues. Les propositions avancées dans cet article constituent en quelque sorte l'étape intermédiaire entre la situation actuelle et celle prônée dans Alexander (2005a,b) pour ce changement de mentalité. Il est plus facile de demander aux gouvernements d'encourager publiquement l'emploi des langues maternelles sans leur exiger d'inscrire ces langues aux programmes des écoles primaires et secondaires comme matières d'enseignement formel. En même temps, l'emploi des langues étrangères sera plus bénéfique dans la mesure où ces langues sont désormais considérées comme un outil d'alphabetisation fonctionnelle pour le développement des africains et poursuivent ainsi les mêmes objectifs assignés aux langues africaines.

Références

- Adegbola, Tunde (2004) 'Globalization: colonising the space flows.' Paper presented at the 24th WALs Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- AFOLA-AMEY Ufulè (2006) 'Étude comparative de l'acquisition du lexique verbal du procès dans les récits oraux des élèves Gen, Mina et Akposso du Togo', *Cahiers d'études de recherches en lettres et sciences humaines (CERLESH)*, No. 24, Presses Universitaires de Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)", pp. 333-362.
- Alexander, Neville (2005a) 'Implementing the Language Plan of Action for Africa: frame of reference prepared for Yaoundé workshop.' In Alexander, N. (ed.) (2005), pp. 21-26.
- Alexander, Neville (2005b) 'The African Renaissance and the African Academy of Languages'. In Alexander, N. (ed.) (2005), pp.51-57.
- Alexander, N. (ed.) (2005) *The intellectualisation of African languages, the African Academy of Languages and the implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa*, Cape Town: PRAESA.
- Attia, Lilian (2006) 'Degree of language endangerment and perspective of revitalization : the case of Vute-Banyo', DEA dissertation, University of Yaounde 1.
- Attia, Lilian and Ngessimo Mutaka (2004) 'The ease of African second language acquisition: some sociolinguistics explanation within a Cameroonian context'. Paper presented at the 24th WALs conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- Kavutirwaki, Kambale & Ngessimo Mutaka (2005) Dictionnaire Kinande-Français avec un index Français-Kinande. Ms. (in preparation).
- Klein, S.B. (1989) *Contemporary learning theories: Pavlovian conditioning and the status of traditional learning theory*, Hillside, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lenneberg, E. (1967) *Biological foundations of language*, New York: Wiley.
- Moe, Ronald (2005) Compiling dictionaries using semantic domains. Ms. SIL International, Dallas, Texas.
- Mutaka, Ngessimo M. & Lilian Attia (eds.) (2005) Building Capacity : using TEFL and African languages as development-oriented literacy tools, Ms. University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon [cet ouvrage].
- OAU Resolution (1987) 'The Language Plan of Action for Africa'. Addis Ababa : OAU. Reprinted in Neville Alexander (ed.) 'Language and Development in Africa', *Social Dynamics*. Vol 25.1. Winter 1999, pp.192-199.
- Ohiri-Aniche, Chinyere (2004) Parents' choice of language to be first acquired by children in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. A paper presented at the 24th WALs Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- Tadadjou, Maurice, Etienne Sadembouo et Gabriel Mba (2004) *Pédagogie des langues maternelles africaines*, Yaounde : Les Editions du CLA.
- Tadadjou, Maurice (2005) 'Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects' in Mutaka, N. & L. Attia (eds.) 2005.
- UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages (2003) Language vitality and endangerment. Ms. Paris : UNESCO Headquarters.

Perspectives for the revitalization of an endangered language: a study case of Vute-Banyo

P. MUTAKA, LILIAN ATTIA, & LEOPOLDINE VOUTSA¹¹

One negative impact of globalization is certainly the endangerment of languages and cultures in the African continent. An examination of the nine criteria of UNESCO¹² for assessing the endangerment of languages would readily show that the majority of African languages are in danger and are in need of revitalization if we take seriously the idea that each language is the embodiment of a culture and that the loss of a language entails the loss of an intangible heritage for humanity. This paper originates from a survey that a research team of linguists conducted on the endangerment of the languages of the Adamawa escarpment in Cameroon. Three of the five members of that research team speak African languages and they realized that the situation of Vute-Banyo and Nyemnyem is certainly similar to the one of most languages on the African continent. We deemed it imperative to write a general paper on the revitalization of our African languages that other researchers could build on to encourage the revitalization of these languages by their speakers across the continent. As was evident from our research, we realized that people generally like their languages and their culture. If we succeed in sensitizing the various governments about the necessity of preserving the ecodiversity of languages, as advocated by UNESCO (UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages 2003), this could create the right atmosphere for revitalizing these languages along with the positive aspects of their cultures. The paper is organized as follows. After specifying the general objectives that the perspectives for the revitalization of an endangered language should meet, we point out the language learning strategies that should be avoided for the revitalization of an endangered language, we then discuss the strategies that should be used and, finally, we give suggestions on the strategies that would best work for Vute-Banyo as a sample of an endangered African language.

I. General objectives for the revitalization of an endangered language

In order to properly determine the objectives for the revitalization of an endangered language, it is important to bear in mind that the sociopolitical atmosphere in which these languages evolve does not favor their expansion. The main reason is that the official languages inherited from colonization are the ones that are financially supported by the states in their language policies. In a country like Cameroon, asking the government to mobilize funds for hastening the revitalization of the African languages would easily be interpreted as a provocation by some political leaders as they would interpret such a request as a way of re-inserting tribalism in the political arena of the country. Yet, the need to preserve language diversity imposes the revitalization of African languages and most particularly the endangered languages since their extinction would be a loss

for humanity. As is well known, a language is the vehicle of culture and it embodies the knowledge that its speakers have perfected throughout immemorial time for their survival as a human community and also for the maintenance of the ecosystem of their land.

In the process of revitalizing an endangered language, it is important to avoid the strategies that contributed to its endangerment in the first place. It is imperative to conceive new objectives that would be acceptable not only for its speakers but also for its political leaders so that its revitalization is not perceived as a way of bringing tribalism in a country through the back door.

Before determining the objectives, let us make an inventory of the needs the African languages in general and the endangered languages in particular usually fulfill. Since the strategies for the revitalization of a language must be different for adults and children, we will endeavor to differentiate these two groups of speakers in our inventory.

What is the use of our African languages in the current political arena?

Notice first that these languages are often used in informal contexts where the different participants share a common language. Thus, in the villages, speakers tend to use their mother tongues instead of the vehicular languages the knowledge of which is not so great. In cities, the situation is more complex. The African language that is used will mostly be a vehicular language just in the case where the speakers have different mother tongues; they will eventually use their mother tongue if they both know it and are comfortable to use it. Let us examine the case where the African languages are used in cities mostly by children.

- a. At school, the children are likely to speak their African languages, notably their mother tongues, outside the classroom. In general, the classroom context is considered formal. Children are expected not to make noise and they must use official languages such as English and French for Cameroon. However, during the breaks, children eventually speak their mother tongues or the vehicular languages when they know that there is no teacher around.
- b. In their families, children often speak the vehicular language. They speak their African language in the case where they have the impression that their parents encourage them to speak it. This is why most children tend to know their mother's language if she often uses it while addressing them. In the case where parents speak different African languages, the children will learn their father's language if their mother made an effort to learn it and speak it as well.
- c. In the public places such as the market, the street on the way to school, in the playgrounds at home, the children use also their African languages which may be a vehicular language if they do not share the same mother tongue, or their mother tongue if they master it.
- d. When children master an African language better than the official language, they will often use it in contexts of intimacy. Most often, they feel pleasure in speaking that language while whispering secrets to one another.

Notice that, in all these cases, the mother tongue, which is here the endangered language, is always at a disadvantage. It is spoken just in the case where the children cannot use the vehicular language.

Given these observations, the objectives for the revitalization of a mother tongue that target children are the following:

- a. Encourage children to speak their mother tongue. Since parents are the main speakers of these languages and they are the ones expected to perpetuate it by transmitting it to their children, it is important to conceive strategies that motivate parents to speak their mother tongue to their own children. It is also important to emulate in the children the need to learn their mother tongues.
- b. Value the elements of culture related to the mother tongue in the eyes of children and the society so that all the community may get the impression that it derives huge benefits from the revitalization of these languages. An example in point would be the revitalization of traditional games that children could be playing during breaks. This implies that parents or the political and religious authorities have accepted the objective of encouraging their children to speak their mother tongues.

Let us now examine the context of use for the mother tongues among the adult populations.

- a. During the political meetings, the politicians often use African languages as they are sure that it is through such languages that their message will be better conveyed and accepted by the population.
- b. Most often, men tend to congregate at drinking places in both villages and cities. Since they feel relaxed in such places, they are likely to speak their mother tongue if they belong to the same ethnic group and know it. Otherwise, they will probably use a vehicular language if they do not belong to the same ethnic group and feel that such a vehicular language expresses intimacy among them.
- c. As for women, they are likely to use their mother tongue with other speakers of that language in informal contexts. In villages, they thus use it in the places where they fetch water and in the fields. As pointed out in Attia & Mutaka (2004), these are privileged places where women practice speaking a new language they intend to learn. In cities, it is mostly during the social meetings of the associations to which they belong. Although the main points on the agenda of such meetings may be discussed in an official language, women will switch to the use of their mother tongues or a vehicular language when the atmosphere becomes more relaxed and informal. In the case where the different speakers know their mother tongue, they are likely to use it more often as it expresses intimacy among them.

- d. Literacy classes for adults constitute an ideal ground for speaking the mother tongue if their objective is learning how to read and write it.
- e. One formal context in which the use of mother tongues is preferred is during the rituals performed at the traditional ceremonies where participants are in communion with their ancestors. In most African communities, it is believed that ancestors only understand the mother tongue and that they dislike imported languages as they know that they are at the origin of the extinction of African languages and cultures.

Given these contexts specific to adults, we now propose the objectives that would be suitable for the revitalization of an endangered language for adults.

- a. Encourage the adults to read information in their mother tongues. Notice our use of the term “adults” instead of “learners” because we believe that the habit of reading information in mother tongues should not be restricted to adults engaged in literacy classes. Since most adults prefer to read newspapers in official languages, it is a real challenge to find news that will draw their attention so that they may read it in their mother tongues.
- b. Incite adults to be proud of their languages and cultures so that they may be motivated to speak these languages with their children for intergenerational transmission purposes.
- c. Incite adults to communicate news in their mother tongues either orally or in writing.
- d. Raise the adults’ interest for their mother tongue through listening to it. We think particularly about the means for exploiting the new technology of information and communication which gives the possibility to individuals to listen to programs in their mother tongues through the radio or with the use of computers as long as the appropriate computer program that translates information aired in those programs is available.

Given these objectives, how to implement them and thus ensure the revitalization of endangered languages? Notice that we should not be lured in thinking that the mere adaptation of the techniques used for learning official languages with formal techniques will work with endangered languages. Before proposing what we believe to be adequate strategies, we would like to draw the reader’s attention to the strategies currently used for learning official languages and which do not look appropriate for learning endangered languages in an African context.

II. Which language learning strategies should be avoided in the revitalization of endangered languages?

Since we have established that the use of mother tongues mostly happens in informal contexts, it is therefore advisable to emphasize the oral skills for learning these languages. Thus, among the four skills of language learning, that is,

speaking, listening, reading, and writing, greater emphasis should lay on the first two.

When devising the strategies for the revitalization of endangered languages, it is important to focus on the strategies that favor the use of the languages. No emphasis should be put on the theoretical knowledge about these languages. Put differently, the following are our suggestions:

- a. The description of the grammar of an endangered language, that is, its phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics should be conceived as an academic exercise that is intended to prepare the field for devising an appropriate orthographic system and the production of texts that will allow the speakers of that language to have access to documentation that is likely to reinforce their desire to use their language more constantly. In a literacy class related to the revitalization of an endangered language, it is useless to teach the speakers of such a language the various tonal melodies of the language, its syllable structure, the phonemes and allophones of that language. Such an exercise must be reserved to a minority of students who are tempted to learn about these languages. These minority students will typically be linguists who are trained in a university or literacy teachers who are convinced about the value of such linguistic knowledge that would allow them to improve the teaching of their mother tongues.
- b. In the case where the learning of these languages occurs in formal structures such as in classrooms, students should not have formal discipline imposed on them as is often the case for regular formal classes. In such formal classes, the teacher is perceived as the only person who imparts knowledge to the students whose role is merely to listen to him and answer his questions. The teacher typically stands alone before the whole class and, to control discipline, the students are expected to remain silent unless the teacher asks a question and designates a specific student to answer it. For classes on the revitalization of endangered languages, we suggest that children be allowed to sit in a position where they face one another, that is, a position that favors dialogue between students. After the teacher has introduced a basic notion, he may ask students to sit in small groups and practice the skills he has just introduced. The teacher's role will be to go round the class ensuring that the students are practicing the skills, and in the case where there is a problem, he helps them. Such a strategy allows the majority of students to actively practice the skills of speaking and listening during the class hours. For an elaborate description of such learning strategies, see Mutaka & Attia in the first part of this volume.
- c. In the case where classes on the revitalization of endangered languages are taught to adults, the teacher should not behave as if he is the only one who imparts knowledge. His role is rather to assist these adults to obtain information that they need and that will help them improve their own business. We should not forget that the adults come into these classes with sophisticated knowledge; at times, they may be real experts

in their own domains of activities. When they decide to take literacy courses, it is in search for specific information they want to acquire. The teacher should rather take the opportunity of helping them acquire that knowledge and also find ways of making these adults share their specialized knowledge with other members of the community. We will address the strategy of getting such specialized information from students in the third section of this paper.

Given these remarks about what to avoid in an endangered language revitalization course, we now discuss the strategies for revitalizing such endangered languages.

III. Strategies for the revitalization of endangered languages

To incite the children to learn their mother tongues:

- a. It is important to sensitize parents, teachers, and the governmental authorities to authorize the use of these mother tongues in informal contexts. This should become part of a language policy that favors the ecodiversity of languages. After several years of cohabitation of these languages with official languages in the formal structures, the authorities should no longer worry that the mere fact of speaking mother tongues during the breaks in the school playgrounds will constitute a danger for the official languages. What they should strive to implement is the use of better methods for teaching official languages as well as mother tongues. Mutaka & Attia (this volume) which emphasizes the importance of focusing language learning on the socioeconomic development of the learners and their communities through the use of official languages and mother tongues is well suited for reaching such an objective. Notice that the mere fact of allowing the use of mother tongues in informal contexts would be a tremendous help for the learners, at least psychologically, as they would know that their authorities encourage them to practice these languages. Such an authorization would allow the students to become proud of their mother tongues. As a consequence, they would feel proud of their traditional cultures and would thus be ready to contribute to their promotion.
- b. Encourage the exchange of secrets using mother tongues. Notice that this practice is currently used in multilingual communities. As pointed out in Attia & Mutaka (2004), women who intend to learn their husbands' mother tongues often use this strategy. As for children who do not know their mother tongues, this strategy helps them learn them. As pointed out in Attia & Mutaka (2004), there is this case of a girl who learned her mother tongue when she was already a teenager. She noticed that, in her new school, people used to communicate their intimate secrets using their mother tongues. Until then, she had thought that she was admired by other students because she spoke French perfectly. She realized that her knowledge of French was not sufficient to live comfortably in her new society. She had to learn her mother

tongue. This motivation to speak her mother tongue thus pushed her to visit her grandparents more often in order to practice speaking it with them.

- c. Encourage parents to practice what Christine Afola-Amey (personal communication) calls the theory of language systematisation,¹³ by making sure that, a child who is one to three years old be exposed to his mother tongue, and that, when the child is between 4 and 7 years old, each of the parents in a mixed marriage will exclusively talk to him in his or her mother tongue because, that is the crucial period during which he acquires his mother tongue (see also Afola-Amey Ufualè (2006). Children from mixed marriages would thus acquire two mother tongues from both parents. Following Christine Afola's suggestion, it is primarily the parents' responsibility to transmit their language to their offspring; the government can only play a secondary role in this endeavor.

To reassert the value of traditional culture in the eyes of children:

- a. Encourage students to collect legends, proverbs, catchy sayings, lullabies in their languages, and then translate them into an official language. This can be given as homework in a language class. This presupposes that the government is already actively encouraging the various communities to get interested in their own cultures. The language teacher could eventually be allowing the students to expose their findings orally during class hours. This would allow the whole class to realize that our African languages possess cultural richness that has remained unexplored.
- b. Encourage students or researchers to make an inventory of games related to traditional cultures. It may happen that some of these games will draw students' interest and that they will sometimes play them while speaking their mother tongues. Notice that, when an inventory of such games is available, people with a high sense of creativity may find a way to adapt them to modern life and thus expand the choice of games offered to children. As an example of traditional games that might interest modern children, consider the types of traditional games found in the Nande culture in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They are: the jump rope that can be played either individually or in groups, hide and seek, the game of the blind where one child puts a loincloth around his eyes and starts looking for his companions or for objects like a blind person, a traditional game of billiards that is played on a plank with 32 holes, the game of marbles, the game of nuts that is played on banana leaves, etc. Revaluing these games would be a way of pushing the children to imagine the type of pleasure their ancestors used to derive from playing such games when they were children. Playing such games would be a further motivation for them to speak the mother tongues as they practice them.
- c. Encourage the formation of clubs based on the learning of mother tongues. Within such clubs, children would find the opportunity of

speaking their languages and listening to them. In such clubs, the organizers could sometimes play traditional music in the mother tongues as a way to familiarize the children with the elements of the culture of such a mother tongue.

- d. In the case where there is a language committee whose objective is to develop that language, children should be encouraged to participate actively in its activities, for example by writing articles that could be published in its local journal if it has such a journal.
- e. Children could also be asked to translate literacy texts into their mother tongues and be encouraged to discuss such texts with their parents or the adults who speak their mother tongues and who are likely to benefit from the contents of such texts. Examples of such texts are found in the appendix of Mutaka & Attia (this volume).

To incite adults to read news in their mother tongues:

- a. Encourage the creation of literacy infrastructure. At first, people will probably be reluctant to join classes organized in such literacy structures because of the idea they currently have of what literacy stands for. Literacy has indeed been confined to the learning of reading and writing for illiterate people. However, if the government leads a publicity campaign in favor of literacy classes by emphasizing the fact that such classes are not simply limited to the learning of writing and reading in their mother tongues, but that they target literate adults who wish to deepen their knowledge of their traditional culture, most probably, many adults will get interested in such literacy classes. The government or the promoters of such literacy centers would strive to equip them with material likely to attract more customers. With the existence of internet, websites that offer materials aiming at sensitizing people about the cultural aspects related to those mother tongues would certainly be created.
- b. Encourage the learning of the orthography of the mother tongue. The devising of the orthography of the language would be devised by linguists in collaboration with the opinion leaders of these languages to ensure that such orthography would be accepted by the population. Our suggestion is that such orthography should be very practical. Since the target population is not necessarily literate in linguistics, the orthography devisers should avoid the use of linguistic characters that would be difficult to decipher. Such orthography must be viewed as both a learning and a reading tool of that language for a population that already speaks it perfectly. For those who do not speak it and who want to learn it, they would still benefit from such orthography as long as the endangered language revitalization course would be mostly based on oral skills. They would thus have several opportunities of recognizing the written words using such orthography during the oral practice of the language.
- c. Make available texts written in their mother tongues and which respond to their real needs. Such texts could be published regularly in a local

journal along such other announcements as birth or death, and any other news likely to interest the speakers of such a mother tongue. Such a journal should be relatively small and the editors should accept also papers written in official languages that the speakers of the mother tongue also speak. This would be a way to incite those among them who do not know how to read their mother tongue to get also interested in the journal. It is our wish that these texts be similar to those published in the appendix of Mutaka & Attia (this volume) as well as the paper on the promotion of a culture of peace.¹⁴

- d. Elaborate a bilingual dictionary that is likely to help the speakers to operate an easy transition between the mother tongue and the official language. One strategy that is easy to use for the collection of the data for such a dictionary is described in Ronald Moe (2005).¹⁵ It can be summarized as follows. First, the linguist devises a number of semantic domains. He then assembles the language speakers into several groups and makes them produce words or expressions related to these various semantic domains. At the end of the work, he organizes the material collected, transcribes it using an appropriate orthography in collaboration with a few language speakers who will have been trained in writing their language with the use of such orthography. Such a dictionary will thus be the result of the close collaboration between the linguist and the language speakers.

To incite parents to speak their mother tongue to their children:

- a. Get encouragement from authorities that would motivate the parents to transmit the language to their children. As a consequence of colonization, numerous parents have come to view their mother tongues as unworthy to the extent that they do not use it when speaking to their children. If we take the case of the Nande culture of DRC, Kinande has long been confined to the villages. In cities such as Butembo and Beni, people speak Swahili which is the vehicular language of the province. This Swahili is actually like a pidgin language with a typical Kinande accent and many loans from Kinande. As a reaction to the catastrophic events related to war that the region of the Nande community has undergone, the Catholic bishop of Butembo-Beni has reminded his flock, on several occasions, of the importance of using Kinande as the language that conveys the cultural values of the Nande people. To him, the war in the Nande area is partly due to the fact that parents have somehow abandoned their responsibility of educating their children, by transmitting to them the cultural values of the Nande community. To use his words, it is a sacred duty for parents to transmit the right values to their children, and the best way of transmitting these values can only be done in their mother tongue. To him, it is a delusion to believe that children can be fully educated by strangers. Children get the right values from their parents and grow up with good habits they will have learned from them. One such habit is the use of their mother tongue that is the vehicle of the Nande

culture.¹⁶ We believe this message is valid for all African governments as well as all the religious authorities who should encourage parents to teach their mother tongues to their children.

- b. Make a habit of using the mother tongue while communicating any information likely to be interpreted as a secret. As pointed out above, it is a strategy that women whose husbands speak a different language currently use to learn their husbands' language. It is a strategy that can be efficient in a multilingual society as it would push each child to feel more connected to his ethnic community when there is an emergency. In the city of Kinshasa, it is a fact that most inhabitants have discovered the necessity of belonging to a specific ethnic group in case of trouble. That is why many people in this cosmopolitan city have been taking literacy classes in order to better learn their mother tongues. We encourage the administrative authorities throughout Africa to use this incentive in order to motivate parents to transmit their language and culture to their offspring.
- c. Have the habit of singing songs in mother tongues as this draws children's attention. As pointed out in Attia & Mutaka (2004), one strategy that some learners use is to memorize songs in the African language they intend to learn. Once they know the words of the songs, they are motivated to know their meanings and the complete meaning of the whole song. They also endeavor to utter words in that new language, and finally, they usually succeed to speak the language. It is a strategy that parents should bear in mind as it may help their children to learn their mother tongue. The types of songs that can definitely excite their interest are the ones found in tales. This would be the best way of restoring what used to give pleasure to children before the bad effects of colonialism as they would sit around a fire and listen to tales and legends. We are also convinced that it is possible to resuscitate the interest for such tales. Mutaka, during his stay in the States, found out that there were professional storytellers who captivated the attention of radio listeners. The new technology of information and communication makes it easy to record such tales. What users can do is simply to play such recordings at home, possibly with the help of parents or grandparents who can be commenting on them and explain their meanings. An alternative strategy for disseminating these tales and legends is their use in literacy classes as pointed out above.

To incite adults to communicate information by using their mother tongues:

- a. Encourage them to retrace the family genealogies. Since every individual would like to know his origin, adults should have the habit of explaining orally or in writing the family genealogies to their offspring. With the use of computers, writing down such genealogies and keeping them as important documents for future generations should not be a difficult task.

- b. During literacy classes for adults, the organizers should foresee time to debate current issues that are of interest to the society. Since the participants come to such courses with the intention of promoting their mother tongues, they will accept more easily the idea of debating such issues in their mother tongues. Thus, instead of limiting the domain of use of the mother tongue to informal situations, people will progressively use them in more formal contexts such as those public debates on politics and religion.
- c. Another proposal for the literacy classes is to encourage participants to develop a topic they are knowledgeable about or a topic on which they are confident that they can collect reliable information and which would be of interest to their own ethnic community. Such topics could deal with the economic development as well as the cultural and political development of the community. Eventually, if the community has a journal that publishes articles in the mother tongue, the write-ups of these topics could be improved and be published in such a journal. As pointed out above, it is not necessary that all the articles of such a journal be in the mother tongue. It would even be advisable to include articles written in the official languages as a way to attract the interest of other language speakers who would wish to learn that mother tongue.
- d. In the market, encourage customers to negotiate prices by using the mother tongue and thus benefit from lower prices. Notice that many communities in Yaounde already use this strategy. There is a special price for the speakers of the seller's mother tongue and a different price for the strangers who do not speak the seller's mother tongue.

To incite interest for mother tongues:

- a. Encourage the creation of community radios and foresee programs in mother tongues that target the local populations. Since each mother tongue in a given area cannot have its own community radio, the scheduling of the air time for each community could be managed by the governmental authorities. It would be an indirect way for the government to encourage the use of mother tongues.
- b. Organize sales of recordings of cultural elements in the mother tongue. These could be proverbs, legends, myths, catchy sayings, etc. Some of these recordings could contain entertainment jokes that are likely to attract the listeners' interest.
- c. Notice also that, with the use of the technology of information and communication, it will become easier to obtain simultaneous translations of electronic texts. We hope that linguists who are experts in mother tongues will make this tool available for the translation of mother tongues as well. This would expand the domain of use of these languages since speakers could then be listening, in their own languages, to texts written in foreign languages (Adegbola 2004).

As for countries that may be already psychologically prepared for the teaching of African languages in their educational system, the following suggestions from Ohiri-Aniche (2004) as cited in Attia (2006) will be useful:

- Make knowledge of L1 (i.e. mother tongue) a condition for issuing First School Leaving certificates.

- Although the varied language backgrounds of children makes it impracticable to use an indigenous language as medium of instruction, nursery schools could, however, increase the indigenous cultural content of their programmes through songs, dances, plays, handicrafts, visits, and exhibitions.
- Make knowledge of indigenous languages necessary, in some domains: as a compulsory school subject at all levels of education; as a prerequisite to admission into higher rungs of the educational ladder and to employment in both the private and public sectors; as a pre-requisite for obtaining certificates of place of origin, citizenship, or passports.

IV. Perspectives for the revitalization of the Vute-Banyo language

Given these guiding principles on the manner of revitalizing endangered languages, we now focus on Vute-Banyo and make specific suggestions for its revitalization. It is our hope that other researchers concerned with the revitalization of our African languages will also closely examine the sociopolitical situation of such languages so as to determine the best strategies that will work for those languages and that take into account the general strategies we have developed in the preceding section.

Before giving our suggestions, we would like to emphasize once more the importance of focusing on oral skills when revitalizing endangered languages in an African context. As mentioned earlier, African mother tongues are mostly spoken in informal contexts. Their revitalization can best succeed within this informal context. It would be unfruitful to think that, to revitalize endangered African languages, it is sufficient to apply strategies used for the teaching of official languages on these mother tongues as is implied in Tadadjeu, Sadembouo and Mba (2004) who believe that African languages will soon feature on the official programs of Cameroon because of a new decree on education and that these languages ought to be taught as subjects just as English, French, and even mathematics.

It is worth mentioning that a large section of the Vute-Banyo speakers are illiterate in French and English. If the language policy of the country were to require the African languages to be taught in schools just like the official languages as assumed in Tadadjeu et al (2004), there would be a double challenge to meet for teaching the Vute-Banyo speakers. They would have to cope with learning the official language and, at the same time, learn to read and write their own mother tongues. While this is a worthwhile future objective,¹⁷ it cannot be considered urgent for the time being as we noticed a number of obstacles that renders the formal teaching of languages difficult in the Banyo area.

Among these obstacles, we mention the isolation of the city of Banyo caused by the bad state of the roads that link it to neighboring cities of the Centre Province and the Adamawa Province. Intercultural marriages are a second obstacle in that the children born from such marriages tend to speak mostly Fulfulde. For their self-esteem, they tended to deny their Vute origin as the Fulfulde masters used to consider the Vute-Banyo people as their slaves. Notice that these obstacles would have no impact on the revitalization of endangered languages such as Vute-Banyo as long as they are based on oral skills. From time immemorial, the population has always succeeded in maintaining its language through oral transmission. Our suggestions backed by our formal training as linguists and language teachers take this oral transmission into account for revitalizing the language.

As we mentioned earlier, the majority of Vute-Banyo are Muslims. This means that they speak Fulfulde and that their children go to Koranic schools where they learn to read and write Arabic. Our non-Muslim informants told us that the Fulfulde conquerors used to tell the Vute that their language was a satanic language and that it should not be used in the mosques. That is why official prayers are in Arabic whereas individual prayers are in Fulfulde.

Another consequence of this *islamization* is that the Vute-Banyo often avoided Christian schools because their conquerors considered them as a threat to the Muslim faith. For the Fulfulde masters, Islam was the only religion acceptable to God and, through it, individuals could hope for a social promotion. This myth was reinforced by the fact that the president of the republic of Cameroon was Fulfulde.

What are the strategies based on oral skills that are likely to revitalize Vute-Banyo?

One asset that should be considered for the revitalization of Vute-Banyo is the organization of the Vute-Banyo society that is directed by a *lamido* (i.e., Islamic traditional chief), surrounded by notables who act like his ministers and who are ready to solve any problem that their community may face. During our preliminary investigation, we noticed that this *lamido* was highly concerned about the development of his region. Therefore, our first suggestion is to sensitize him about the advantages his various communities would derive from getting more interested in their traditional culture and their mother tongues. We are confident that this strategy will bear fruits because, one of the reactions we got from several people we interviewed was that they were now interested in their culture because their *lamido* had told them that it is a good thing to do so. In Banyo, several speakers who used to present themselves as Fulfulde now acknowledged that they were of Vute-Banyo descent even if they no longer spoke Vute and that they wanted to get involved in the Vute cultural manifestations.

The existence of a Vute literature center in Yoko, in the Centre province, is another asset to explore for revitalizing Vute-Banyo. The types of documentation on the Vute culture that would include legends, myths, proverbs, catchy sayings, traditional knowledge of medicinal plants could thus be archived in that center. It would also be important to create an

expansion of that center in Banyo so that more people may have easier access to this documentation without the hassle of traveling long distances to reach a Vute literature center. It might be advisable that the center be non-denominational so that it may cater better to the Muslim Vute-Banyo populations who might be reluctant to use it if they know that it belongs to Protestant missionaries.

The fact that most Vute-Banyo children are Muslims and that they obligatorily learn to read and write in Arabic in the Koranic schools is a third asset to exploit for the revitalization of Vute-Banyo. It can be used to break the myth that it is only through Arabic or Fulfulde (the vehicular language that was imposed by the Muslim conquerors) that one can communicate with God. The *lamido* of Banyo informed us that, to sensitize his people about the AIDS pandemic, he translated a number of flyers into Fulfulde, using the Arabic characters. As most of his people were already literate in Arabic, they were pleased to read useful information on AIDS prevention in a language they master but using Arabic characters. We imagine that a similar endeavor would succeed to draw people's attention if, instead of using Fulfulde, such useful literature was in Vute-Banyo with the use of the Arabic characters.

The most important undertaking would be of course to collect the appropriate documentation on the Vute-Banyo culture. Once the data of such documentation is collected, it will need to be written and copies of it should be offered to the *lamido* so that he may help disseminate it among the Vute-Banyo community. This would be a way of restoring the feelings of self-esteem of the Vute-Banyo people. As an aftermath of colonialism, they had been told for a long time that their language and their culture had no value. We know that the Vute were great warriors and that, if they are a minority in Banyo, the reason is that most of them have fled towards other regions to conquer other communities (see document on history of Vute Yoko). There is also a need to collect documentation on medicinal plants as well as on myths, legends, proverbs, songs, ritual ceremonies, lullabies, etc.

Although we have insisted on the supremacy of oral skills for the revitalization of an endangered language, it is still necessary to teach a few native speakers who are interested in the language the orthography of their language that will make it easier for them to read and write it. These elite will then be in charge of translating and interpreting written texts that might be of interest to the Vute-Banyo speakers and which are written in foreign languages. The organization of the Vute-Banyo society makes this task easy since the *lamido* with the help of his notables can designate a few individuals among the Vute-Banyo speakers and ask them to undergo this literacy training in reading and writing Vute-Banyo. The possibility for other Vute-Banyo who wish to join such literacy classes would remain open. As more and more people learn to read and write Vute-Banyo, they will encourage other Vute-Banyo speakers to appreciate their language and eventually contribute written texts that will promote further the language and the Vute culture.

Notice that if the *lamido* can be convinced of implementing these strategies for the revitalization of mother tongues, it will be easier to open literacy centers in various quarters whose objective would be to help the population learn better their culture and develop their language, and also pursue the objectives of a functional literacy the main preoccupation of which is to pave the way for an economic, moral, social, and cultural development. The remark by the character called SJ in Tadadjeu (2005) should remain a leitmotiv for every African who works for the development of his community. This character exclaimed thus: 'it would be great to have a text on beekeeping in both French and Yemba (SJ's mother tongue). I will no longer have to repeat the same explanations to the peasants because, once they read the document, they will understand immediately the process of producing honey'.

To conclude, for the revitalization of an endangered language such as Vute-Banyo, it is important to restore its speakers' confidence in their language so that they may feel proud to speak it. Because the language is essentially used in informal contexts, the strategies used for teaching official languages that are used in formal contexts may not be useful for the revitalization of endangered languages. One important duty for linguists as well as sociologists and anthropologists is to collect elements of its culture such as legends, myths, proverbs, catchy sayings, riddles, lullabies, songs and traditional dances, rituals for traditional ceremonies, and the knowledge on the medicinal plants. These cultural elements will constitute a basis for the promotion of the language by its speakers. Linguists should also devise an orthography that is suitable for its speakers. This orthography should also be taught to a small number of Vute-Banyo speakers who will help disseminate it progressively as a means to pave the way for a culture of reading and writing which remains a precious tool for the development of a language. The other basic document linguists should work on is a bilingual dictionary which, in the case of Vute-Banyo, should be Vute-French with a French-Vute index or Vute-English with an English-Vute index. Such a dictionary will prove useful for the Vute-Banyo speakers as a tool for learning French or English as the official languages that opens doors to the outside world.

Notes:

¹¹ This paper has been written thanks to the support we received from UNESCO for conducting a survey of endangered languages in the Adamawa escarpment of Cameroon. We wish to thank Bruce Connell and David Zeitlyn as the UNESCO grant beneficiaries.

¹² Those criteria are: (a) intergenerational language transmission, (b) absolute number of speakers, (c) proportion of speakers within the total population, (d) shifts in domains of language use, (e) response to new domains and media, (f) materials for language education and literacy, (g) governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies including official status and use, (h) community members' attitudes toward their own language, (i) amount and quality of documentation.

¹³ Sa théorie de "systématisation des langues" est une qui consiste à choisir délibérément une ou deux langues qui seront parlées systématiquement à l'enfant par deux personnes différentes dans un couple ou ailleurs, de préférence à partir de un à trois ans, de un à sept ans ou de un à quatorze ans, dans toutes les circonstances. Quand l'enfant se dirige vers le père ou vers la mère, il ne s'adresse à lui ou à elle que dans cette langue à la maison ou partout ailleurs. Pour justifier cette approche, elle s'appuie sur l'argument de Lenneberg (1967) selon lequel, de un à trois ans, le cerveau jouit d'une grande plasticité qui permet à l'enfant d'acquérir et de garder pour toujours (sauf en cas d'atteinte d'une maladie cervicale quelconque) toutes les structures de sa ou de ses langues de l'enfance. Par ailleurs, de un à trois ans se mettent en place dans la tête de l'enfant tous les concepts linguistiques qui lui permettent plus tard d'acquérir harmonieusement toutes les autres langues étrangères (Klein 1989).

¹⁴ Notice that African languages which meet the UNESCO's nine criteria on language endangerment may still have aspects of their languages and culture in danger of extinction and that need urgent preservation. One case in point is the knowledge of medicinal plants in many African cultures. Because of modern medicine, such knowledge tends to be forgotten and may soon disappear. It is our wish that the preservation of such aspects of language endangerment within non endangered languages benefit from available funding for preserving the intangible heritage for humanity.

¹⁵ Copies of the author's list of semantic domains and related materials are available from him via email at ron_moe@sil.org.

¹⁶ This message by bishop Melchisedech Paluku Sikuli is found in the preface to the Kinande-French dictionary by Kavutirwaki and Mutaka (2005).

¹⁷ Most probably, the reason why our various governments have not implemented the Language Plan of Action for Africa (OAU resolution 1987) or the proposals in Neville Alexander 2005a,b that advocate the use of African languages as languages of instruction in the school system is that no provision has ever been made that, prior to fully implement these proposals, the decision makers as well as the society have to undergo a change of mentality during which they will regain their self-esteem through the use of their mother tongues. Our proposals in this article are this missing link between the current situation and the one advocated in Alexander 2005a,b. It is far easier to ask the governments to publicly encourage the use of mother tongues without necessarily requesting them to put those mother tongues on the official programs of primary and secondary schools. At the same time, the use of the foreign languages will prove more fruitful if they can be used as functional literacy tools. They would thus fulfill the same objective as the one assigned to African languages.

References

- Adegbola, Tunde (2004) 'Globalization: colonising the space flows.' Paper presented at the 24th WALs Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- AFOLA-AMEY Ufulàlè (2006) 'Étude comparative de l'acquisition du lexique verbal du procès dans les récits oraux des élèves Gen, Mina et Akposso du Togo', *Cahiers d'études de recherches en lettres et sciences humaines (CERLESH)*, No. 24, Presses Universitaires de Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)", pp. 333-362.
- Alexander, Neville (2005a) 'Implementing the Language Plan of Action for Africa: frame of reference prepared for Yaoundé workshop.' In Alexander, N. (ed.) (2005), pp. 21-26.
- Alexander, Neville (2005b) 'The African Renaissance and the African Academy of Languages'. In Alexander, N. (ed.) (2005), pp.51-57.
- Alexander, N. (ed.) (2005) *The intellectualisation of African languages, the African Academy of Languages and the implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa*, Cape Town: PRAESA.
- Attia, Lilian (2006) 'Degree of language endangerment and perspective of revitalization : the case of Vute-Banyo', DEA dissertation, University of Yaounde 1.
- Attia, Lilian and Ngessimo Mutaka (2004) 'The ease of African second language acquisition: some sociolinguistics explanation within a Cameroonian context'. Paper presented at the 24th WALs conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- Kavutirwaki, Kambale & Ngessimo Mutaka (2005) Dictionnaire Kinande-Français avec un index Français-Kinande. Ms. (in preparation).
- Klein, S.B. (1989) *Contemporary learning theories: Pavlovian conditioning and the status of traditional learning theory*, Hillside, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lenneberg, E. (1967) *Biological foundations of language*, New York: Wiley.
- Moe, Ronald (2005) Compiling dictionaries using semantic domains. Ms. SIL International, Dallas, Texas.
- Mutaka, Ngessimo M. & Lilian Attia (eds.) (2005) Building Capacity : using TEFL and African languages as development-oriented literacy tools, Ms. University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon
- OAU Resolution (1987) 'The Language Plan of Action for Africa'. Addis Ababa : OAU. Reprinted in Neville Alexander (ed.) 'Language and Development in Africa', *Social Dynamics*. Vol 25.1. Winter 1999, pp.192-199.
- Ohiri-Aniche, Chinyere (2004) Parents' choice of language to be first acquired by children in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. A paper presented at the 24th WALs Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- Tadadjou, Maurice, Etienne Sadembouo et Gabriel Mba (2004) *Pédagogie des langues maternelles africaines*, Yaounde : Les Editions du CLA.
- Tadadjou, Maurice (2005) 'Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects' in Mutaka, N. & L. Attia (eds.) 2005.
- UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages (2003) Language vitality and endangerment, Ms. Paris: UNESCO Headquarters.

Vers une production du matériel destiné à l'enseignement des langues maternelles : extraits de Jules Assoumou (2005)

JULES ASSOUMOU ET PHILIPPE MUTAKA

Dans le souci d'encourager la production du matériel destiné à l'enseignement des langues maternelles, nous avons cru important de publier des extraits de la thèse de doctorat de Jules Assoumou (2005) intitulé « Modèle d'enseignement des langues maternelles orales dans l'éducation de base au Cameroun : recherche et développement en zone bulu ». Ces extraits concernent la caractérisation des livrets d'activités de langues maternelles orales, le schéma des leçons de ces langues maternelles et les objectifs généraux pour l'enseignement de ces langues.

1. De la conception de matériel en langues africaines orales

Notre souci de publier le tableau suivant est de donner une idée aux auteurs potentiels du matériel en langues africaines le genre de matériel qu'il serait indiqué d'inclure dans un ouvrage pour faciliter son emploi comme manuel scolaire. Il serait en effet idéal qu'un tel ouvrage contienne des contes, proverbes, poèmes, des textes de jeux chantés dont les objectifs correspondraient à ceux spécifiés dans le tableau.

Caractérisation des livrets d'activités de LMO (Assoumou 2005 : 304)

<i>Niveaux</i>	<i>Niveau I</i>	<i>Niveau II</i>	<i>Niveau III</i>
Méthode	Basée sur les principes de l'approche culturelle et de l'approche communicative	Idem	Idem
Objectifs	-acquisition de ressources linguistiques de base -Acquisition de ressources culturelles de base -acquisition d'une compétence linguistique et culturelle élémentaire	-Renforcement de l'acquisition de ressources linguistiques et culturelles de base -Acquisition de ressources linguistiques et culturelles relativement complexes -acquisition d'une compétence linguistique et	-Consolidation de l'acquisition de ressources linguistiques et culturelles relativement complexes -acquisition de ressources linguistiques et culturelles complexes -Acquisition d'une

Contenus	-10 contes/fables /chantefables -10 proverbes -05 jeux chantés -05 poèmes pour récit -03 danses -05 pratiques coutumières -10 réalités modernes	culturelle intermédiaire -10 contes/légendes/fables/chantefables -10 proverbes -05 jeux chantés -05 poèmes pour récit -03 danses -05 pratiques coutumières -10 réalités modernes	compétence linguistique et culturelle avancée. -10 contes/légendes/fables -02 épopées -10 proverbes -05 jeux chantés -05 poèmes pour récit -03 danses -05 pratiques coutumières -10 réalités modernes
Caractéristiques	-Textes simples et courts -Situations et thèmes pris à la réalité socioculturelle -Indications pédagogiques -Pédagogie active	-Textes relativement complexes -Situations et thèmes locaux avec ouverture sur le monde -Indications pédagogiques -Pédagogie active	-Textes complexes -Situations et thèmes locaux avec ouverture sur le monde -Indications pédagogiques -Pédagogie active

2. Du schéma des leçons

Notre choix de l'extrait sur le schéma des leçons relève du fait que Assoumou (2005) semble avoir tenu compte des propositions de Mutaka (2006a,b) en début de cet ouvrage sur les stratégies d'apprentissage de l'anglais comme pouvant s'appliquer sur l'enseignement de nos langues africaines orales.

Schéma des leçons (Assoumou 2005 : 327-332)

(a) Conte, fable, chantefable et légende

Etape 1 : mise en condition

Les élèves quittent leur salle de classe pour se rendre sous un arbre, dans la cours ou dans un autre pièce. Ils s'asseyent en demi-cercle devant l'animateur.

Etape 2 : Introduction

Le maître présente l'activité : il dit aux élèves qu'ils vont étudier un conte ; il leur en donne le titre et pose une ou deux questions préliminaires.

Etape 3 : présentation auditive

- L'animateur raconte l'histoire avec expression, change de rythme et d'intonation pour soutenir l'attention, provoquer de la tension, du relâchement et de l'humour ; ou alors :
- Le maître raconte l'histoire, ou fait écouter un enregistrement aux élèves, interrompt son récit et invite les élèves à imaginer la suite de l'épisode, reprend l'histoire, demande le sens d'un mot, explique un concept, demande aux élèves d'anticiper la fin de l'histoire, puis reprend le récit et le termine.

Etape 4 : analyse et synthèse

Le maître pose des questions de compréhension sur les personnages, l'espace, le temps, l'action..., puis interroge les élèves sur l'intrigue et leur demande de dégager l'intérêt du texte et éventuellement de trouver un proverbe qui traduirait la moralité ainsi formulée.

Etape 5 : application et évaluation

- Dramatisation :
Des élèves sont invités à représenter les personnages du conte (présentateur, premier, deuxième,...ième personnage) L'interprétation est libre, même si les répliques sont corrigées. Une seconde dramatisation serait souhaitable.
Le maître demande aux élèves de raconter l'histoire par petits bouts (jeu de furet) ;
- Construction d'un discours oral :
Le maître demande à dans élèves de raconter l'histoire entière. La prestation est suivie d'une mise au point collective (les erreurs et les omissions sont corrigées) et d'une reconstitution d'ensemble.

(b) Epopée

Etape 1 et 2 : cf. enseignement du conte

Etape 3 : présentation auditive

- Le joueur de mvet (épopée en langue bulu) raconte l'histoire tout en jouant de son instrument. Il simplifiera son discours pour la circonstance, question de l'adapter à son audience ; ou alors :
- Les élèves écoutent l'enregistrement. Le maître interrompt l'enregistrement de temps à autre pour poser des questions, donner une explication, attirer l'attention des uns et des autres sur ce qui vient de se passer et ce qui va suivre.

Etapas 4 et 5 : cf. enseignement du conte.

(c) Proverbe

Etape 1 : Introduction

Le maître dit aux élèves qu'ils vont étudier un proverbe. Il procède par découverte pour arriver au proverbe du jour.

Etape 2 : Présentation auditive

Le maître dit le proverbe et demande aux élèves de le reprendre en chœur, puis individuellement.

Etape 3 : analyse.

Le maître pose des questions sur le sens des mots-clefs du proverbe, l'origine du proverbe, le sens du proverbe, ses implications sociales, son intérêt, etc. Les élèves émettent des hypothèses.

Etape 4 : synthèse récapitulative

Le maître fait répéter le proverbe et procède à une mise au point collective sur son origine, sa signification et son intérêt didactique, à une mise en commun et à la validation des hypothèses.

Etape 5 : Application et évaluation

- Le maître demande à des élèves de raconter une histoire, une anecdote ou un conte illustrant le proverbe.
- Le maître demande aux élèves de trouver des proverbes similaires dans la langue ou dans une autre langue.

(d) Devinette

Etape 1 : Introduction

Découverte de l'activité par jeu de questions-réponses

Etape 2 : Présentation auditive

Présentation du modèle et observation globale. Explication de la procédure d'exécution. Mémorisation du texte s'il y a lieu.

Etape 3 : Exécution

Exécution individuelle, en paires ou en groupes.

(e) Poésie chantée et récitée

Etape 1 : Introduction (cf. enseignement de la devinette)

Etape 2 : Présentation auditive

Présentation du modèle : le maître récite entièrement ou chante entièrement le morceau.

Etape 3 : Apprentissage

Les poèmes sont appris uniquement par audition. La progression se fait par phases poétiques ou musicales successives. Avant de passer d'une phase à l'autre, le maître prendra soin de redresser toutes les erreurs de rythmes, de justesse... Il reliera les phases musicales les unes aux autres au fur et à mesure que les premières seront sues.

Etape 4 : Exécution

Les élèves récitent/chantent à l'unisson. Dernières corrections par le maître. Productions individuelles, puis collectives.

(f) Jeux chantés, mimés ou dramatisés

Etape 1 : Introduction (cf. enseignement de la devinette)

Etape 2 : Présentation

Présentation auditive et visuelle : présentation du/des texte(s) et de la saynète : appropriation d/des texte(s) et des principes dramaturgiques par les élèves.

Etape 3 : Préparation de l'exécution

Sélection et répartition des acteurs, détermination des principes d'exécution.

Etape 4 : Exécution (cf. enseignement de la devinette).

(g) Danses

Etape 1 : Introduction (cf. enseignement de la devinette)

Etape 2 : Présentation

Présentation auditive et visuelle : Présentation du texte et de la musique du chant, puis présentation des séquences et des mouvements de la danse.

Etape 3 : Apprentissage

- Apprentissage du chant : cf. apprentissage de la poésie chantée et récitée
- Apprentissage de la danse et des instruments : les différents mouvements de la danse seront enseignés progressivement, d'un mouvement à l'autre, d'une phase à l'autre.
- L'apprentissage des instruments : Il suivra également une progression séquentielle mais concernera surtout les « instrumentistes ».

Pendant les différentes phases d'apprentissage, le maître ou l'artiste redresse toutes les erreurs éventuelles jusqu'à la meilleure prestation possible.

Etape 4 : Exécution

Les danseurs chantent et dansent à l'unisson, accompagnés des instrumentistes. L'enseignant procède aux dernières corrections et clôture par une dernière prestation collective.

La danse et l'expression dramatique sont appelées à être poursuivies dans les activités post et périscolaires au sein des clubs de danse et d'art dramatique, champs d'application par excellence de ces apprentissages.

(h) Coutumes et traditions, réalités modernes

Etape 1 : Introduction (cf. enseignement de la devinette)

Etape 2 : Présentation

- Présentation et observation globale par jeu de questions-réponses : origine de la pratique, sa nature, sa valeur ... ; émission des hypothèses ; ou
- Présentation de la pratique par un élève.

Etape 3 : Synthèse récapitulative

Mise au point collective : mise en commun et validation des hypothèses ; complément d'information par le maître ;

reconstitution par jeu de questions-réponses ; récapitulation par le maître.

Etape 4 : Exploitation

- Mise en relation avec les pratiques d'ailleurs
- Etat actuel de l'observation de la pratique

Etape 5 : Discussion

Débat : pour ou contre la pratique ?

(i) Oratoire/rhétorique

Etape 1 : Introduction (cf. enseignement de la devinette)

Etape 2 : Présentation (cf. jeux chantés et dramatisés).

Etape 3 : Préparation de l'exécution

Choix de la scène, distribution des rôles, explication détaillée portant sur la scène, l'intrigue et ses séquences, les rôles des personnages...

Etape 4 : Exécution

Représentation de la scène sous forme de petit spectacle

Etape 5 : Evaluation

Evaluation de la prestation des acteurs par les élèves et le maître.

(j) Généalogie

Etape 1 : Introduction (cf. enseignement de la devinette)

Etape 2 : Présentation

Présentation de l'activité ; présentation d'un modèle par le maître ; explication du « projet de recherche ».

Etape 3 : Apprentissage

L'apprentissage s'effectue auprès des parents à la maison ou auprès d'autres personnes ressources de la localité.

Etape 4 : Préparation de l'exécution (cf. jeux chantés et dramatisés)

Etape 5 : Exécution

Exécution en paires.

3. Des objectifs généraux pour l'enseignement des langues maternelles orales.

En vue d'insuffler un vent nouveau d'encouragement pour la revitalisation de nos langues maternelles, il est important que les décideurs, les enseignants et les apprenants soient convaincus de la valeur intrinsèque de ces langues. Les objectifs généraux pour l'enseignement des langues maternelles orales tels que décrits dans Assoumou (2005) peuvent, s'ils sont bien compris par les utilisateurs de cet ouvrage, aider à mieux percevoir la nécessité de la promotion de ces langues et, selon notre souhait, aider les africains à utiliser l'alphabétisation comme un outil pour leur propre développement.

Objectifs généraux pour l'enseignement des langues maternelles (Assoumou 2005 : 293-294) :

- développer [chez l'apprenant de la langue maternelle] sa faculté d'écouter et de retenir un texte oral

- développer ses moyens linguistiques, en dotant sa langue de ressources expressives riches, aux fins d'une expression élocutive, compréhensible, juste, aisée et précise
- Renforcer sa capacité à exprimer verbalement ses émotions et ses sentiments à propos d'une situation évoquée; à formuler et exprimer oralement une pensée; à rapporter, à interpréter, à commenter, à expliquer (...) un fait, un événement, etc.
- acquérir un esprit critique dans l'analyse des textes oraux, s'entraîner par le contact des textes oraux à manier des idées, développer l'imagination et la sensibilité
- saisir les valeurs intrinsèques qui constituent l'âme de sa société, connaître et apprécier sa culture; connaître et apprécier la culture des autres
- maîtriser, apprécier et s'approprier les trésors de l'esthétique orale traditionnelle; comprendre la portée sociale, les valeurs esthétiques et toutes les richesses des textes artistiques traditionnelles, en tirer à la fois plaisir et profit
- former sa personnalité, se forger une identité, être à même d'exprimer sa culture, de comprendre celle des autres et de puiser dans ce qu'elles sont d'enrichissant grâce à des activités qui assurent son ouverture d'esprit.

Références

- Assoumou, Jules (2005) 'Modèle d'enseignement des langues maternelles orales dans l'éducation de base au Cameroun : recherche et développement en zone bulu', thèse de doctorat Ph.D., Université de Yaounde 1.
- Mutaka, Ngessimo M. (2006a) 'Revival of classroom activities through exercises' in *Building Capacity : Using TEFL and African languages as development-oriented literacy tools*, Mutaka and Attia (eds.) (this volume).
- Mutaka, Ngessimo M. (2006b) 'Practical suggestions for teaching English as a foreign language' in *Building Capacity : Using TEFL and African languages as development-oriented literacy tools*, Mutaka and Attia (eds.) (this volume).

Overpowering the anti-African values ghost in us: Reflections on the introduction of African languages in the school system

PHILIP MUTAKA

0. Introduction

During a recent conference of Linguapax Afrika held in Yaounde, Cameroon, on December 12-13, 2006, there are a number of very personal remarks that the three special guests gave in a plenary session and which encapsulate the wishes and fears of most African researchers as they ponder upon the potential success or failure in introducing African languages in the school system. These remarks are the following:

- (a) From Professor Felix Marti of Linguapax international: For a sustainable development of sub-Saharan Africa, there is an urgent need for Africans to
 - Reject completely the neo-colonialism perspective in the way they run their businesses in the continent. African countries are too dependent on the western world, most particularly on France and the USA, and to a certain extent, on China as well. It is high time that Africans find an authentic way embedded in the cultural aspects of their cultures that will lead them to the development path. Even in matters of religion, it would be desirable that their Christian religion or their Islam be different from the one of the imported colonial masters. They have to find a way of living their Christian religion or Islam in a way that harmonizes with their genuine cultural values;
 - Promote an inter-African cooperation at the political, economic, and intellectual levels. The right way would be for them to start with sub-regional cooperation and aim for an inter-African globalization;
 - Promote the cultural communities in their diversities. This means that, they should encourage communities to be autonomous at the cultural and political levels, much as the Catalan and the Basque communities live side by side with the Spanish in Spain;
 - Concerning the management of cultural diversity, it is important that all the languages be officially recognized as a way to reinforce the cultural identities of the different communities. This means that Africans would find their full cultural identities through the practice of their mother tongues, lingua francas they eventually speak, and the official (imported) languages such as French and English. The governments should see to it that these languages are used as official languages and in the media, for example, on radios and in the internet.
 - Most importantly, the teaching of these languages in the school system has to be judiciously organized, and great emphasis should be put on their oral knowledge.

- (b) Professor Adama Samasekou, former Education minister of Mali and current Secretary General of ACALAN (Académie Africaine des Langues, an organ of the African Union) emphasized, among other things, that some of the objectives of ACALAN are
 - To promote the African transborder languages as a way to reconstitute the intercultural tissue of Africans that has been torn apart by the colonial powers at the 1885 Berlin conference during which Africa was subdivided into colonies by Western powers;
 - To promote the conviviality between languages: the lingua francas spoken in the African continent would be reinforced by the mother tongues that are rightly called identity languages (langues identitaires in French);
- (c) Professor Maurice Tadadjeu of the University of Yaounde 1 and winner of the 2006 Linguapax prize for his work on the promotion of African languages expressed, among other things, personal fears that might prevent the success of the implementation of African languages in the school systems in various African countries. Those fears are the following :
 - Many elites including the intellectual class and government people do not seem to care at all about African languages. Even when they publicly support the promotion of these languages in the school system, they cannot be taken seriously as long as they do not foresee a budget line in their annual budget for the implementation of measures aiming at promoting African languages.
 - The new generation, especially in urban milieus, has no faith in those African languages. Many youths do not even speak these languages.
 - Africans should beware of the aid they obtain from foreign donors for the promotion of African languages. This might be a trap in that, once the program fails, this will further reinforce the supremacy of the official languages that have been imposed by the colonial powers.

To my mind, the various concerns expressed by the above scholars translate a malaise that the different stakeholders in the promotion of African languages have not succeeded to pinpoint. It is a malaise that is experienced by the elites, the government people, the new generation, the scholars working on these languages and which explains their behavior in relation to the promotion of these languages. In this paper, I would like to make an attempt of pinpointing the source of this malaise, give it a face, and offer innovative ways to engage the introduction of the African languages in the school system from a much sounder and firmer base. I would like to warn the readers that this paper will be highly provocative in that it will blast the face of several people who are convinced that the course they have taken is the right way for the promotion of African languages. They will find that this might not be so. I hope they will ponder the observations I will elaborate in this paper in order to fine-tune their work and correct the

course in which they have been engaging the promotion of African languages. My proposals will rest on the following assumptions:

- (a) The promotion of African languages does not have to be seen as engaging African languages in a competition against official languages. This is bound to be a lost battle. As Felix Marti said, Africans have to find new ways of redefining themselves, away from the neo-colonialism mentality. They have to look into aspects of their cultures to redefine themselves and decide what they would really like to be in order to properly develop as Africans.
- (b) We must find a way of promoting every single African language, including the endangered languages, since they help express our identities, as individuals. To achieve this, we must avoid putting too much emphasis on the writing and reading skills in the mass promotion of these languages. We must encourage the use of the oral skills (listening and speaking) and avail ourselves of the new technology of information and communication which can greatly enhance the achievement of these goals at a minimal cost. Insisting on the reading and writing skills would engage us into expenses that we are not ready to face in the near future.
- (c) As for the contents of the language courses that should be introduced in the school system, it is imperative that they reflect our genuine aims of attaining our own development at the cultural, economic and social levels. The term “genuine” here refers to innovative cultural behavior that Africans would like to emulate in themselves and which takes into account the positive sides of their African cultures along the new features they would like to develop in themselves as they learn from other cultures (Western, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Korean cultures, that is, cultures of people who have succeeded to engage their countries onto the path of cultural and economic development.)

The paper will be organized as follows. First, I will discuss the potential or real problems the current programs of the promotion of African languages are bound to be mired into, then I will propose an outline of a school curriculum that should be promoted at the various levels of the school system and will end the paper with recommendations for implementing the African languages in the school system from a sounder and firmer base.

1. Unveiling the ghost of failure in current programs related to the promotion of African languages

In this section, I will discuss what I see as weaknesses in the programs that deal with the promotion of African languages, notably the teaching of African languages emphasizing the writing skills, the drive of engaging African languages into a competition against official languages, and inherent traps that are likely to be counterproductive for the promotion of African languages.

(a) Emphasizing the written skills in a program of African language teaching.

Classical language teaching recognizes that there are four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening and speaking are the oral skills that are usually taught prior to the introduction of reading and writing. For most language teachers, the ultimate aim for language teaching is to teach the reading and writing skills that render a learner literate. In fact, literacy has always been defined as the teaching of reading and writing skills. For most language teachers, the introduction of African languages in the school system automatically means the introduction of reading and writing of those languages. This is certainly a lofty aim. But the problem arises when the government decides to introduce African languages in the school system. For language teachers, it is imperative to devise an orthography for each language if it does not have one, and also find appropriate reading materials in those languages. It would certainly be imperative to start training teachers for these African languages. All this requires a lot of money. As a palliative measure, some governments have decided to only introduce a few languages, mostly the lingua francas or the languages spoken by large numbers of people. The question now is: is this the right solution? It certainly is not because this would mean that the languages spoken by minorities will be left out. And yet, the ultimate aim of introducing African languages in the school system is to allow Africans regain their full identity and self-esteem through the use of their own mother tongues. For practical purposes, an African is usually multilingual. His mother tongue is his identity language. He will also speak or learn a lingua franca chiefly as a trade language. He will learn the official language, mostly at school, or as another lingua franca if he learns it from the streets as is the case in a country like Cameroon where most francophones speak French.

Notice that, the problem of choosing a few languages is imposed because of the high expenses a government would incur in promoting several languages simultaneously. Yet, the problem would be mitigated if the oral skills were to be emphasized. There are so many advantages in doing this.

1. People who are literate in the official languages usually have no problem in deciphering texts written in African languages. Think about the biblical texts or the catechism and songs that village peasants read without having ever been prepared systematically to read the African languages at school. Refresher courses for encouraging people to read could easily be done outside the classrooms for people who really need them.
2. From immemorial time, our African languages have been maintained orally. The new technology of information and communication now makes it far easier to enhance the listening and possibly the speaking skills in those languages. It is important that we do not ignore this technology. Like Tunde Adegbola (personal communication) said, in the near future, literacy will be redefined as basically the capacity to process information by listening and eventually explaining it orally as the ICT (Information and communication technology) gadgets will permit people to listen to all sorts of texts anywhere (e.g., in the forests, on the road, at home). He rightly believes that these new gadgets will be replacing paper books as we know them today. It is therefore important that the school texts devisers foresee materials that will be

essentially aired and used in these ICT gadgets. This is a unique opportunity to thus introduce texts that teach about African cultures and other cultures likely to help Africans engage firmly on the path of development. When used in classes, the teachers will no longer be using up the students' precious time in correcting mistakes in writing as is done in formal official language courses, but they will be encouraging them to talk and listen more to texts that can better shape their mentality into becoming Africans who feel fully integrated in the modern world and in which they are comfortable using at least three different languages that connect them to their environment.

3. Very few African languages could be introduced in the school system and they would be taught merely as a way of showing the various domains students could exploit in their mother tongues. Such courses would certainly give a general introduction on the orthography and alphabet used in African languages, and they would also introduce domains where African languages are useful. Such courses would, for example emphasize their use in introducing new concepts related to health, agriculture, conflict resolution among people who would not understand those concepts in the original official languages or other African languages from other countries.
4. A program which emphasizes oral skills would certainly become more popular among the masses as they would feel that their individual cultures are being promoted because they can hear their languages on radios, television, and in the ICT gadgets. I believe we could learn from the peoples of Latin America who, according to Josep Cru (personal communication), have been very enthusiastic in asking Linguapax International to help them obtain CDs and DVDs in which they can hear their languages. They have been specifically telling the Linguapax representatives that they do not need books on their languages but material they can only listen to and that can spur them to fully enjoy and revive the positive aspects of their cultures.

(a) *A second problem has to do with the mentality of saying:*

“if English or French can do this, why not do it in our African languages as well?” It is a mentality that has led current stakeholders in the promotion of African languages to propose or even implement works such as the following:

- ❖ the need to create departments where courses would be taught in African languages and where dissertations would also be written or are written in African languages.
- ❖ the need to present talks in African international conferences using African languages.
- ❖ the so-called language engineering where technical words used in the official languages are created to enrich African languages as a way to introduce technical concepts that did not exist in those languages

On the face of it, this is really wonderful. Departments that have succeeded to implement such initiatives are usually given as the models for other language and linguistics departments to follow. I have for example heard a scholar saying that, in his department, they can now teach syntax and phonology in an African language and that, in other departments, physics and mathematics are also taught in African languages. I have also heard “inflammatory” speeches

by highly respected senior linguistic professors publicly declare that, as long as students have not started writing their dissertations in African languages, they cannot truly qualify as “real African linguists.” When professors committed to this way of thinking present their talks in a plenary session, they usually start them in an African language and then continue with the rest of the talk in the official language that their audience understands. Their talks usually raise frenetic applause even if the audience has understood nothing in the part read in the African language.

Let us presently look at the negative side of such initiatives. What they have in common is that they simply put English, French and other worldwide official languages in competition with the African languages. The question now is, even if those initiatives succeed, will they change the lot of African people on their way to development? Speaking about the African language on which I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation, which benefits do my people derive from my teaching them lexical phonology or syntax in Kinande for example? Do they really care about the phonology or the syntax of Kinande? Why would I spend my time trying to translate phonological and syntactic concepts in Kinande, knowing that it is not easy to do so? Who would be my audience? Just in case I even succeed to write my phonology courses in Kinande, in order for other scholars who do not speak my language to understand my writings, these courses would presumably have to be translated in those other African languages and in the official languages as well. Who would pay for these translations? Who would do those translations correctly? Is this really the right move when African governments have been complaining about the lack of funds for promoting their development? How could a responsible government perceive the translations of such writings in other languages as a priority?

A more serious problem is that, for scholars who believe that worldwide official languages should simply be replaced by African languages, they are beset by the neo-colonialism mentality mentioned in the warning by Felix Marti at the beginning of this paper. Instead of delving in our cultures and seeing what we can possibly do with our African languages to use them as a tool for our development, such scholars perpetuate the mentality that what the classical schools have produced as science is all that matters. Africans simply have to translate those so-called scientific concepts into African languages in order to develop. What a fallacy? I do not think that lexical phonology and syntax taught in Kinande will develop my people. At the same time, I also know that the lexical phonology or syntax of Kinande that has been written in a language that the international scientific community understands is very useful as it permits the Kinande culture to participate in the framing of scientific theories that make linguists try to understand the human being, from a worldwide perspective, in his use of language.

An area where the promotion of African languages has made progress in certain languages is language engineering. Swahili in Tanzania is certainly cited as the epitome of this initiative. Swahili, as a transborder language, certainly deserves to be highly developed and be introduced in the school system of various African countries as a model language from which the alphabet and orthographies of other African languages could be taught. As is well known,

Swahili is spoken not only in Tanzania, but also in Kenya, Uganda, eastern DRC, and to a certain extent in Rwanda and Burundi. It is essentially a *lingua franca* or a trade language that allows inter-cultural communication. With the introduction of technical terms that are being introduced in the Tanzanian Swahili, it becomes more and more difficult for other countries to understand it. It will be turning into a new technical language, just like the language registers of lawyers and medical doctors that French or English speakers find difficult to understand even though they are part of French or English. Will Swahili with excessive technical engineered words still serve its purpose of easing intercultural communication? Wouldn't it be more judicious to allow a language engineering of Swahili that remains close to the speech of its speakers? The technical words that are destined to enrich Swahili would be taken from the way people, in the various countries who use Swahili as a *lingua franca*, already speak the language. It would be more preferable to use borrowed words that speakers can relate to the concepts of the original languages which, in most cases, are official languages, than creating words that render communication almost impossible. I just wish to report that a Canadian scholar once sent me three sentences to translate because he knew that I spoke DRC Swahili. As I could not translate them, I had to ask several people, including Ugandans, Kenyans and Tanzanians for help. No one was sure how to translate them until we had to have recourse to a dictionary of technical terms of the sort being promoted in Tanzania. The point for this remark is that, as we use our African languages, if we write them, let us write them using concepts that the audience will easily understand.

As for scholars who encourage students to write their dissertations in African languages, I wish they could do a simple test: write a scientific abstract of their talk in an African language. This might be easy for talks in sociolinguistics or language teaching. But I wish to challenge them to write such an abstract in lexical phonology, in optimality theory, in syntax, or in semantics. They will realize that it is not easy at all. They will of course retort that we should never avoid complications. They are probably right, but they should know that the time one puts in translating such texts could be used more judiciously if one were devising texts that may prove useful, in terms of development, to the audience of that African language. Although it might seem awkward to use a popular Biblical response by Jesus, notably "give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's", I believe this concept also befits what we should do with our African languages and the knowledge we have gained from our contact with the western civilization. French and English and other official languages have now become part of us. That is why we participate to the culture of the world using those languages. We still need to continue research on our languages that meets the requirements of scientific papers as established by the scientific communities to which we belong. At the same time, our African languages are also useful in domains that are not necessarily covered by the official languages such as English and French. That is the challenge Felix Marti, in the introductory notes to this paper, invites us to address, notably, in looking into our cultures and defining new ways of developing new knowledge that is deep rooted in our traditions. In the second section of this paper, I will propose a number of courses that are

likely to generate new knowledge and that could be implemented in our school systems.

- (c) A third source of problems has to do with what Tadadjeu (personal communication) calls traps, but not in the sense he exemplifies those traps. To him, one of the traps is inherent in the funds provided by foreign donors in that, they may fund programs which are likely to fail so as they may use this failure to further enhance the promotion of official languages, notably French and English.

I believe, where the trap lies is the way African scholars use those funds and make themselves subservient to their colonial former masters. You will for example notice that the African scholars who oppose the proposal of putting greater emphasis on the oral skills are the ones who work in or manage institutions funded by foreign donors. As they grew up, they learned that the ultimate objective of literacy is to teach reading and writing. To them, the programs they have devised in their textbooks are perfect. Any attempt to show them a new perspective that takes the influence of the ICT gadgets into account in the way of redefining the aims of literacy is perceived as a personal attack against the objectives they have devoted their entire lives defending.

Another trap related to this fixed mind is the network between the senior university scholars who believe they are the only ones to know the direction for the promotion of African languages. To my mind, they have created a situation like the one that explains the stalling of linguistics in Europe as opposed to its development in the United States. For a long time, a professor in Europe was considered as the ultimate authority in his domain. His assistants only served to propound his ideas. However, in the States, a scholar is assessed on the value of his argument. This has helped young scholars from American universities come up with ideas that have revolutionized linguistics and the senior professors have adopted those ideas because they were based on convincing arguments. To relate this to the promotion of African languages, I hope the senior African linguistic scholars will accept to question their contribution to the promotion of African languages. It would be beneficial if they ponder some of the key ideas proposed in this paper, notably

- (a) isn't it correct to lay more emphasis on the oral skills as proposed in Felix Marti's remarks in the introduction of this paper?
- (b) is putting African languages in a blind competition with official languages the correct move as is currently done by initiatives that seek the writing of dissertations in African languages and teaching technical courses in African languages with the attendant problems of translation and the expenses that would necessarily ensue if the decision makers were to accept such initiatives?
- (c) wouldn't it be wiser to direct the researchers' energy into devising courses that help Africans hasten their cultural, social, and economic development through the use of both African languages and official languages?

Because foreign donors will always remain our partners in the promotion of African languages, the question is to know how to use their funds. I believe, as African scholars, we need to better define our roles. We are part of the international community and it is our duty to contribute, through the study of our languages, to the construction of linguistic theories that explain the language phenomenon as a human endowment. It is normal that we be using languages that our international partners understand for this endeavor. As African scholars, we do also have the duty of promoting the positive features of our cultures through a judicious use of the course contents of African languages that should be introduced in the school systems of our various countries. This appropriate course content is still in the making. The works that have been produced so far and that still consider literacy as primarily the learning of reading and writing skills as well as the advanced works on language engineering for enriching our African languages should not be considered as the primary material destined for mass education in our school systems. The appropriate material that should be introduced in the school systems is yet to be refined. In the following section, I propose guidelines and course titles of the kind of works that would have to be developed in order to constitute the course contents of African language courses.

2. Implementation of African languages into the school system

Assuming that, as Africans, we all accept the idea that our African languages should primarily serve as a tool for our cultural, social, and economic development, how can this best be achieved?

- ❖ It is, above all, a matter of political will. It is up to the scientific community to advise the decision-makers how to implement measures that will render these languages a tool for our development.
- ❖ We also have to agree on the realistic objectives to achieve for the implementation of African languages in the school system. To my mind, these objectives are the following:
 1. help develop our countries at the social, cultural, and economic levels
 2. help our students learn better their cultures along the cultures of their neighbors
 3. cultivate a culture of peace among nations
 4. develop self-esteem through the use of our languages

These objectives can be achieved if we agree to make the following points the core of our programs in the school system at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

- Translation of texts, more precisely functional literacy texts
- Producing texts that can be used in community radios and through satellite communications
- Learning actively a language, being able to hold a conversation in that language

- Encouraging students to discover aspects of their languages notably in having each student to work on a project that allows him to collect original material from speakers of that language.
- Learning aspects of your neighbor's culture
- Redefining the goals of language teaching in general in our schools. As for the contents of the language curricula, it is imperative that African languages as well as official languages be taught in order to help enhance our development at the social, cultural, and economic levels (Mutaka and Attia 2005, this volume).

Before making specific proposals for the various levels of the school system in sub-Saharan Africa, let me address two crucial issues.

The first issue concerns the assimilation of the elites in their way of thinking. I believe it is important that we avoid thinking like our former colonial masters. This is an opportunity for us to innovate the implementation of African languages in our school systems. Let us not make it as if it is the colonial masters in our collective minds who will be dictating us what to do. Let us rather look at the stakes to know what we gain from the teaching of African languages and choose our ways of teaching those languages with such clear aims. Beware of the pressure you will get from the representatives of the "Francophonie" because they do not want to lose ground. Beware of the teachers of foreign languages who have been taught to exclusively teach the culture of the foreign languages to their students. It is high time that foreign languages also contain more elements of the African cultures. We will need to trim the programs of foreign language teaching, retain the quintessence of those programs, eventually improve the teaching of those programs by integrating for example inspirational texts from other cultures that have propelled their people to cultural and economic fame (e.g., the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Korean cultures) but also, use those foreign languages to also teach elements of our African cultures. This is important. A reshuffling of the programs will be necessary and it is possible if there is a political will to really re-insert our African languages into the school system. This would partly solve the overburdening of our current programs to leave enough room for the new materials we wish to teach about our African languages and cultures.

The second issue concerns the choice of the languages to teach. The prevalent idea is that only lingua francas and languages spoken by large numbers of nationals would be selected. This idea reflects the position of Kwesi Prah (2002a, 2002b) who believes that, on the continent, around twelve to fifteen languages can be chosen and be introduced in the school systems of the continent because they cover 80% of the sub-Saharan African population.¹⁸ What I would like to forcefully stress here is that this cannot be a solution. It is as if the propounders of such ideas want us to replace official languages by these African languages. They should bear in mind that the same difficulties students have for learning foreign languages will re-emerge for learning these African languages. People who propound such ideas are beset with the colonial master syndrome in that they believe that things have to always be done in the old way.

I believe, the best idea will be to promote all the African languages, as is also emphasized in the remarks by Felix Marti and Adama Samasekou at the beginning of this paper. People will react that this is impossible because we need to standardize languages and choose only a few languages for standardization purposes. Such people will give you myriads of reasons to convince you about the difference between a language and a dialect, and they are likely to tell you that your mother tongue is merely a dialect, implying that it is not worth promoting. This is part of the fallacies of the western cultural mind. The robust fact is that, whatever language you speak in your community is worth promoting as it is the one that better translates your cultural identity. As will be shown in the proposals in this paper, the new technology of information and communication makes it possible to now promote any language. In the following, I now give specific proposals for the school system.

Primary level:

The oral use of African languages should no longer be prohibited. Students should be made to feel proud to speak their mother tongues outside the classrooms. They should even be encouraged to obtain further informal explanations of the course contents in their mother tongues.

Cultural elements of African languages should be part of the school curriculum (see contents in the table below adapted from Assoumou (2005).

Students should be encouraged to master at least one African language. This can be achieved by telling them that they will be graded and that their parents must actively teach them their language.

Just in case they live in a context where they cannot practice their mother tongues, they will be asked to meet the requirement of speaking an African language by learning about the culture of other languages. These languages do not have to be taught as part of the school curriculum. Contribution of parents in this domain is required.

We also encourage the education industry to promote gadgets that are likely to promote the learning of African languages. Such gadgets would allow pupils to listen to interesting stories in their mother tongues, give the opportunities to the users to ask questions, record the answers from the various participants in a conversation. Tunde Adegbola (personal communication) informed me that such gadgets are in the making and that they will soon be available. They are very small personal computers and they will be costing 100 dollars each. Another useful gadget sold by Vtech of Great Britain is in the form of a small computer. It uses cards that the child can introduce in that computer and answer questions on the contents of each card. It is a gadget that can potentially turn into a good teaching tool if those cards can be made to teach African languages or African cultures.

One big challenge that will need to be addressed is the production of textbooks that can be used for teaching African languages. In the following table, I strongly recommend the suggestions from Assoumou (2005) for preparing such textbooks for any language.

A proposal of features that activity books of mother tongues instruction at the primary level should contain (a translation of a table from Assoumou 2005 : 304)

Levels	Level I	Level II	Level III
Methodology	Based on the principles of cultural and communicative approaches	Idem	Idem
Objectives	-acquisition of basic linguistic resources -Acquisition of basic cultural resources -acquisition of a basic linguistic and cultural competence	-Reinforcement of the acquisition of basic linguistic and cultural resources -Acquisition of relatively complex linguistic and cultural resources -acquisition of an intermediary linguistic and cultural competence	-Consolidation of the acquisition of relatively complex linguistic and cultural resources -acquisition of complex linguistic and cultural resources -Acquisition of an advanced linguistic and cultural competence.
Contents	-10 tales/stories /tales including songs -10 proverbs -05 games with songs -05 poems for reciting -03 dances -05 cultural practices -10 modern realities [+15 riddles]	-10 tales/legends/stories/ tales including songs -10 proverbs -05 games with songs -05 poems for reciting -03 dances -05 cultural practices -10 modern realities [+ 15 riddles]	-10 tales/ legends/ stories -02 epics -10 proverbs -05 games with songs -05 poems for reciting -03 dances -05 cultural practices -10 modern realities [+15 riddles]
Main features	-Short and simple texts -Situations and topics from the sociocultural milieu -Pedagogical instructions -Active pedagogy	-Relatively complex texts -Situations and topics from local milieu that give an opening to the world -Pedagogical instructions -Active pedagogy	-Complex texts -Situations and topics from local milieu that give an opening to the world -Pedagogical instructions -Active pedagogy

Assoumou also suggests lesson plans for the teaching of different topics that form the contents of mother tongue instruction, that is, the steps for teaching (a) Tales, stories, tales with songs, legends (b) Epics (c) Proverbs (d) Riddles (e) Poetry that may be sung or recited (f) Games accompanied by songs, mimed games or role-played games (g) Dances (h) Customs, traditions, and modern realities (i) Oratory/rhetoric (j) Genealogies (see details in the paper by Assoumou and Mutaka in this volume).

Notice that, at the primary level, I am not proposing the promotion of the reading and writing skills of mother tongues. Although this may seem ideal, it does not seem appropriate for the time being. Since African languages are mostly used informally, their use at the primary level should reflect this informality. It is important that we not be tempted to start teaching primary school children about the language. Reading and Writing skills are complex processes they may not need at this level. We would be better off if we teach them about our African cultures that are embodied in those languages so that they may start developing self-esteem through the use of these languages. The teaching of these languages should not become a burden to them, but rather a precious opportunity for them to learn interesting things about their cultures.

Secondary level:

Before proposing the types of African language courses that should be taught in secondary school, a word on the challenges to meet is in order here.

- (a) In general, students in city schools have a different background from those who live in the countryside. Whereas there is typically one African language that may be spoken in the countryside, in cities, students may speak different African languages, if ever they speak them, otherwise, most children probably speak French or English, or an African lingua franca that may be different from the language of their parents.
- (b) Imposing a single language would not be readily accepted by parents. However, for each area in the country, people are more likely to accept a lingua franca as the African language to be taught at school.
- (c) It is important that teachers and students alike understand the difference between teaching a language and teaching about a language. Teaching a language implies that students will be speaking the language. The teacher will typically use the communicative method. Grammatical rules are not taught systematically; rather, students practice the oral skills through speaking and doing a lot of exercises during which they manipulate the grammatical structures. Teaching about the language is teaching such phenomena as tones, nouns, adjectives, grammatical structures, etc. What secondary school children certainly need is to be able to speak an African language which may be their mother tongue or a lingua franca or any other African language they like.
- (d) It is also important that students be trained to appreciate their African cultures and hopefully grow up with the knowledge that they must help promote a culture of peace in Africa.

Because of all the above, here are my proposals.

- (a) In a given area, whether it is in the countryside or in a city, for a given level, a teacher will choose one language that will be taught as a school subject. That language should preferably be a lingua franca or a language that is widely spoken in the area. It should have enough literature and it should have a structure that is simple enough. Swahili would be an ideal language as it is a lingua franca in several African countries and it has a simple five-vowel system. The teaching of such a language will essentially be based on the methodology of teaching languages for conversational purposes. The tips for teaching English as a foreign language described in Mutaka and Attia (2005, this volume) is a good introduction book that should inspire language teachers of African languages.
- (b) When the teacher gives exercises, children who want to self-learn their own mother tongues will have the option of doing exercises on their mother tongues. The language taught in the class will simply serve as a model for applying the strategies for teaching an African language. In the case where a child does not know his mother tongue, he will simply have to learn that language and make of it his African language. Children who choose to do exercises on their own mother tongues will have to have a written permission from the school authorities who will arrange with their parents or tutors how to do the follow-up of their progress in learning their mother tongues.
- (c) There will be other courses that deal with African cultures and that all the students have to take. These may be based on readings provided by the teacher or inspirational literature texts likely to help students grow into the kind of people Africa wants for the future.

As course titles, I propose the following:

Topics in L1 culture. This course will cover such topics as health, education, environment, food security, conflict resolution.

African language course. This will include: vocabulary, reading, grammar, conversation, text exploitation, sometimes dictation in the upper level classes. What is called text exploitation may include material production whereby students are required to do research on a given topic by contacting the native speakers of the language or finding material on internet.

In addition, texts on African culture will necessarily feature in lessons of other languages such as English, French, German, Spanish, etc. These will be functional literacy texts.

Tertiary level:

Since it is at the tertiary level that these African language courses need to really be developed as the university students who will have undergone these courses are the ones who will probably be teaching them in the secondary school, it is important they fully cover the objectives we assigned them earlier. These objectives are the following: a. Translation of functional literacy texts b. Producing texts that can be used in community radios c. Learning actively a

language so as to reach a conversational level in that language d. Encouraging students to discover aspects of their languages by working on a project that pushes them to collect original material from speakers of that language e. Learning aspects of your neighbor's culture

Other suggestions, mostly from Tadadjeu (2005) and Tadadjeu et al. (2004) are: writing and orthography principles, material design and production techniques, dictionary making in local languages, organizing and managing literacy classes. Notice also that it is at the tertiary level that the material collected on a wide range of development issues such as health, education, the environment, food security, conflict resolution could be used in the satellite communication system which, according to Tadadjeu and Chiatoh (2002:9) could then combine with newspapers in local African languages to provide lasting information to the community.

These ideas need to be presented in terms of course units with credits. We assume that such courses will be taught from the third year onwards in the university or the institutes of higher education for students who intend to specialize in African languages. Some courses will also be proposed to students from the linguistic departments and other departments as electives. Here is a proposal with explanations for the intended course contents of each course:

LING xxx Translation techniques: students need to know general principles for translating. They also need to learn about tips for translating. They could apply these principles from English to French or from French to English. They will then be introduced to translation of texts in African languages.

LING xxx L2-L1 Translation: Students will be translating literacy texts from English or French or any other widely spoken language into the mother tongue. Each student works with the mother tongue he intends to specialize in.

LING xxx L1-L2 Translation: students will be translating original texts from the mother tongue to English or French. These are texts that they will have collected from native speakers of the language and that they could use later on to broadcast in community radios.

LING xxx Material production in L1: students will be encouraged to produce texts in the mother tongue. These texts may be songs, dances, epics, anything that is part of the cultural practices of the mother tongue.¹⁹

LING xxx Material Production in L2: Students will be encouraged to produce texts on the culture of an African language. They should show original research on mother tongues, but they will report their findings in English or French. These are texts that could possibly be used in the community radios.

LING xxx Conversation in L1: students should be trained to practice conversation in the mother tongue. In the case where there are no other students who speak their language, they are allowed to do this practice outside the class. They could tape their conversations for an eventual assessment of their ability to talk in their mother tongue.²⁰

LING xxx Advanced Conversation on topics related to African cultures. This course will consist of role-plays, debates that are on issues related to

African cultures and also on inspirational literature from other cultures (American, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, etc.)

- LING xxx Directed Research in L1: Students will be encouraged to research on topics that are relevant to African cultures. This does not have to be on the culture of the mother tongue. It can be on any African culture. It can also be on a completely different culture but which might be of interest to Africans.
- LING xxx Directed Readings in L1: Students will be encouraged to read specific papers that will teach them about specific African cultures. They will be asked to write reports on those cultures, using the material in those readings as background information
- LING xxx Orthography design in L1: this will be a rather general course where students need to learn about the alphabet of African languages, the marking of tones, the principles for separating words, etc. They will be applying these principles on excerpts from specific African languages that the teacher will foresee as course material.²¹
- LING xxx Dictionary compiling in L1 (level 5): this is an advanced level course. Students should be trained to compile a dictionary. We suggest that they use the tips in Ronald Moe²² (2005) on how to start a dictionary in collaboration with the native speakers of the language.
- LING xxx Literacy class management (level 5): This is an advanced level course where students will be trained how to manage literacy classes.
- LING xxx Topics in African Culture. This is a course where the instructor will discuss topics related to African cultures; possible topics can be: naming ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, funerals, etc.)
- LING xxx Topics in L1 culture. This is a course where the instructor will encourage students to read on topics that might enhance the development of African people. These are topics the contents of which could also be aired in community radios. It is in this course that the following subjects will be discussed: health, education, environment, food security, conflict resolution.

3. Recommendations

In order for the program to succeed, I wish to add the following recommendations culled from published literature on the subject.

Following Attia's recommendations, the introduction of compulsory African language study at the tertiary level should be considered as an urgent need. Students should be required to take one or two semesters of a course of conversation in an African language, possibly as a special course (Attia 2006). This would certainly contribute to fight efficiently against the alienation syndrome that characterises the intellectual African elites. They would learn to regain self-esteem in the use of their languages and value their African cultures.

In countries where there are language committees, these should be encouraged to develop material produced in African languages that is related to people's history and literature. If possible, members of such language committees should comprise elites from various fields as well as knowledgeable people in the languages who may not be well read. They would work in synergy with university

students or secondary school students to research and produce materials that could be used in community radios for the cultural, social, and economic development of their ethnic communities.

Regretting the growing inability of children to speak indigenous languages and the attendant identity crisis, Ohiri-Aniche (2004) also gives some suggestions on how indigenous languages can be handed over to children. These suggestions, as reported in Attia (2006), are specifically addressed to parents, teachers, and researchers as follows.

(a) To Parents

- Right from birth, parents should speak their mother tongues to their children and make them respond in it.
- Parents should expose children in the home to folktales, songs, games, home videos, story books, bible readings in the L1.
- Parents should take children home to the village and grandparents periodically.
- Parents should encourage children to participate in indigenous cultural activities
- Parents can get relatives or other people who speak the L1 to live with the family and interact with the children in the L1.
- Parents should be made aware that it is a crime against a child and abuse of his human rights to deprive him of his ancestral language.
- Even when a child has not initially learned the parents' L1, effort should be made to encourage him to still learn the language; the child should be gently led to do so; he should never be mocked or punished for any mistakes made.
- Parents should constantly let their children know the advantages of being able to speak their parents' L1 – It is a language of intimacy which brings the family close together; it makes the children know who they are and be proud of their identity; it prevents them from being foreigners in their communities; it lays good foundations for future creativity in arts, culture, and sciences.
- Parents should require the school authorities to make knowledge of L1 a condition for issuing First School Leaving certificates.

(b) To Teachers

- Teachers should firmly impress on parents that the task of bringing up their children to speak their indigenous languages rests squarely with parents, in their homes
- Although the varied language backgrounds of children makes it impracticable to use an indigenous language as medium of instruction, nursery schools could, however, increase the indigenous cultural content of their programmes through songs, dances, plays, handicrafts, visits, and exhibitions.

(c) *To the researchers*

- They should carry out massive awareness and advocacy campaigns to sensitise parents, communities, and the public alike of the need to make sure that children acquire indigenous languages. During such campaigns, they should also emphasize the negative consequences for not doing so, notably, the demise of these languages and the identity crisis children would have to face.
- They should make knowledge of indigenous languages necessary, in some domains: as a compulsory school subject at all levels of education; as a prerequisite to admission into higher rungs of the educational ladder and to employment in both the private and public sectors; as a pre-requisite for obtaining certificates of place of origin, citizenship, or passports.

To reinforce the learning and knowledge of African languages and cultures, the political authorities should allow or encourage the formation of clubs based on the learning of mother tongues as suggested in Mutaka and Attia (2005). Within such clubs, children would find the opportunity of speaking their languages and listening to them. In such clubs, the organizers could sometimes play traditional music in the mother tongues as a way to familiarize the children with the elements of the culture of such a mother tongue. They could also create websites that contain cultural features on the language, including useful published material on the language.

Notice also that, with the use of the technology of information and communication, it will become easier to obtain simultaneous translations of electronic texts. We hope that linguists who are experts in mother tongues will make this tool available for the translation of mother tongues as well. This would expand the domain of use of these languages since speakers could then be listening, in their own languages, to texts written in foreign languages (Adegbola 2004).

4. Concluding remarks

To conclude, I would like to reiterate the key ideas in this paper and end with some thoughts that may help African languages fit in the arena of the sweeping globalization that may lead to their extinction or to their preservation and ultimately their revitalization.

Although African languages have been relegated to a secondary role in the language policies of most African countries as an aftermath of colonization, there is a possibility for these languages to play a more active role in the day-to-day activities of the African people if new language policies can be enacted in such a way that language courses (i.e., English, French, and African languages) are made to reflect clear objectives of seeking social, cultural, and economic developments that harmonize with African values that are deep rooted in various African cultures. One recurrent complaint has been that no nation has ever developed if it does not use its national language as the language of instruction. By this reasoning, Africa seems to be indefinitely condemned if it does not operate a quantum leap of replacing its official languages by national languages as

languages of instruction. Yet we know this is merely rhetoric. The propounders of such ideas still use English or French. And what is more embarrassing, if you were to probe their personal lives, you will discover that their children usually study in **Western schools**. The situation has arisen because, almost all the intellectual elites are a product of western schools and they have never taken the decisions of deeply reforming the school curricula so that these might reflect their own African cultures.

Whether we like it or not, English and French will remain with us. They are global languages. They have invaded most domains of our lives. Our children will always see TV programs in English or French, they will access internet in those official languages. We therefore have to perpetuate the teaching of these official languages as world languages. What we have not done and that we should do is to make the contents of these official languages reflect more our African values. Learning a foreign language or an official language does not necessarily mean learning all the details about its culture. It is high time that we trim our programs of languages and retain what is truly important so that we may leave, in our school programs, enough room for the teaching of truly African cultural values through the use of the official languages and African languages.

As programs for the teaching of African languages are being enacted, it is important to not idealize African cultures. Not everything African is necessarily good. There are so many anti-values, having to do with witchcraft and sorcery that we do not want our children to learn. But there are also many aspects of African cultures conveyed through oral literature, games, dances, drumming, proverbs, riddles that can render Africans proud of their cultural values and that other cultures could learn from Africa. These should form part of the contents of African language instruction. The other part is the revitalization of every African language as part of the drive to preserve and revitalize the cultural heritage of mankind (UNESCO 2003). A third type of course content has to do with the learning of cultural values of neighboring countries and other continents so as to promote a culture of peace. The course units in the second section of this paper have been proposed to cover those three concerns. As has also been emphasized in this paper, the language instructors have to insist on the material production and self-tutoring in African cultures done by students with the objectives of using the findings of such personal research in community radios. In this way, African languages and official languages will truly serve as tools for enhancing the development of African people.

Textbooks that reflect all these objectives remain a great challenge for the effective implementation of this new program of mother tongue instruction. Mutaka and Attia (this volume) is a truly useful introductory book that will serve this purpose in that it gives tips on how to improve the teaching of English as a foreign language and it contains samples of literacy texts that can be exploited in language classes that should henceforth become tools for enhancing the development of African people.

Notes:

¹⁸ Kwesi's goal is to harmonize dialects into mutually understandable languages, thereby creating "economies of scale" in teaching and learning literacy. Kwesi's research reveals that 75 to 80 percent of all sub-Saharan Africans speak one of twelve root languages: Nguni, Sotho, Tswana, Swahili, Amhara, Eastern Inter-Lacustine, Western Inter-Lacustine (Kitara), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Bambara, FulFulde, Oromo, and Berber. Dialects within each root grouping are mutually intelligible.

¹⁹ What is intended in this course is that students be able to produce material that reflects the cultural education of the African people. This material would cover what Kwesi Prah includes in the following citation: "Children learnt by doing, that is to say, children and adolescents were engaged in participatory education through ceremonies, rituals, imitation, recitation and demonstration. They were involved in practical farming, fishing, weaving, cooking, carving, knitting, and so on. Recreational subjects included wrestling, dancing, drumming, acrobatic display and racing, while intellectual training included the study of local history, legends, the environment (local geography, plants and animals), poetry, reasoning, riddles, proverbs, story-telling and story-relays" (Kwesi Prah 2002b).

²⁰ Students should be encouraged to listen to oral texts, and eventually to react. This would meet the challenge of focusing literacy on oral skills (listening and speaking) as the new technology of information and communication tends to favour this type of literacy. As pointed out by Tunde Adegbola of Nigeria, a specialist in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT), in the near future, written documents may become outdated because of the use of ICT gadgets. With these gadgets, people will be able to have whole books on something like a flash disk and they can listen to it anywhere (in cars, in the field, at home, in the forest). He actually showed me one such gadget when I met him in Benin at the 2006 WALs conference. He said that these instruments can be used for literacy as people can listen to literacy texts, ask questions, and you automatically record the questions and the answers that are given. He thus made me listen to a text in Yoruba about combating AIDS that he has actually used in his fieldwork in Nigeria.

²¹ This will be an opportunity to introduce the orthographies worked out by the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) research group of Kwesi Prah on what he calls the 12 to 15 core languages whose speakers cover 85% of the African population (Kwesi Prah 2003).

²² It can be summarized as follows. First, the linguist devises a number of semantic domains. He then assembles the language speakers into several groups and makes them produce words or expressions related to these various semantic domains. At the end of the work, he organizes the material collected, transcribes it using an appropriate orthography in collaboration with a few language speakers who will have been trained in writing their language with the use of such orthography. Such a dictionary will thus be the result of the close collaboration between the linguist and the language speakers.

References

- Adegbola, Tunde (2004) 'Globalization: colonising the space flows.' Paper presented at the 24th WALs Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- Assoumou, Jules (2005) 'Modèle d'enseignement des langues maternelles orales dans l'éducation de base au Cameroun : recherche et développement en zone bulu', thèse de doctorat Ph.D., Université de Yaounde 1.
- Attia, Lilian (2006) 'Degree of language endangerment and perspective of revitalization : the case of Vute-Banyo', DEA dissertation, University of Yaounde 1.
- Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2002a) 'Language, neo-colonialism and the African development challenge' in *Tricontinental*, Havana, Cuba No. 150.
- Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2002b) Education, Mother-tongue instruction, Christianity and Development of an African national culture. Paper presented to the International Conference on "visionen fur das berufliche bildungssystem in Africa." Loccum, Germany. 13th-15th February 2002. In Lawford Imunde (ed.) *Reflections on education systems in Africa*. Loccumer Protokolle, Germany.
- Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2003) Going native: language of instruction for education, development and African emancipation. Keynote address presented to the Launch Workshop of Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA), Morogoro, Tanzania: 22nd to 24th April 2002. In Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai and Martah Qorro (eds). *Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* (LOITASA), E & D Limited. Dar-es-Salaam.
- Moe, Ronald (2005) Compiling dictionaries using semantic domains. Ms. SIL International, Dallas, Texas.
- Mutaka, Ngessimo M. & Lilian Attia (eds.) (2005) *Building Capacity : using TEFL and African languages as development-oriented literacy tools*, Ms. University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon.
- Ohiri-Aniche, Chinyere (2004) Parents' choice of language to be first acquired by children in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria. A paper presented at the 24th WALs Conference at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 1-6 August 2004.
- Tadadjeu, Maurice (2005) 'Enhancing the role of African languages in local development projects' in Mutaka, N. & L. Attia (eds.) 2005.
- Tadadjeu, Maurice, Etienne Sadembouo et Gabriel Mba (2004) *Pédagogie des langues maternelles africaines*, Yaounde : Les Editions du CLA.
- Tadadjeu, Maurice & Blasius Chiatoh (2002) 'The challenge of satellite communication in African languages' *African Journal of Applied Linguistics*, No. 3, pp. 1-15.
- UNESCO ad hoc expert group on endangered languages (2003) Language vitality and endangerment, Ms. Paris: UNESCO Headquarters.

Growing seeds of peace in an African war-torn world

PHILIP MUTAKA & LILIAN M. ATTIA

Introduction

Most probably, the people who truly value the importance of peace are those who have experimented the atrocities of war or other conflicts within their families. They realize that peace is a most precious commodity for several obvious reasons: economic prosperity, cultural richness, family stability, possibility of their offspring achieving their full potential. Unfortunately, as is observed nowadays, peace has become a rare commodity in our African countries. Greg Trihus of SIL/Yaounde branch was absolutely correct when he told us that, one of the best contributions linguistics could do to a country is to help revitalize a culture of peace among its people (personal communication). Yet, most of us tend to think that maintaining peace in a country is the business of the government people. But is it really, especially that, from the grim situations we witness all over the continent, the strategies devised by various governments have not been successful? What we daily hear in the news are stories of wars, rapes as a war tool, family displacements, the number of refugees increasing at an alarming rate in various African countries, etc. In this paper, we would like to propose a solution that basically appeals to our leaders' emotional feelings of sincerely wanting to promote peace because, soon or later, everyone will have to account for their actions before a divine judge. To make this obvious in the minds of these leaders, first, we will sketch the grim situations created by war and other conflicts, secondly, we will discuss the deep reasons that underlie these grim situations, thirdly, we will lay out our proposals for solutions to grow the seeds of a peace culture in such a war-torn world and we will conclude the paper by showing the advantages of such a solution as compared with the solutions often devised by our current governments.

Life may present a grim picture for some of us

As you are reading these lines, do you know that millions of people in several parts of the world are undergoing ineffable suffering? You are probably happy with your family, sipping a glass of champagne with your friends, expecting your decent salary, making plans to earn more money. It might be useful for us to think about the fate of people who are not as lucky as you. And they are numerous. Often times, it is not their fault. They are merely victims of warlords waging wars among themselves.

You have certainly heard about the genocide in Rwanda. This is a situation where black people like you and I, with families that they cherish, saw their loved ones being ruthlessly killed. Most of these people are Christians and they are God-fearing individuals. Not everybody was a killer. But the killers were certainly sons and daughters of Rwandan people, and they killed simply because one happened to be tall whereas the other was short, or because of such

differences in the shape of the nose or of the lips. Most of these people died because their parents had told them that, when you are a Tutsi you are superior to a Hutu, that you are entitled to most favors that your government can offer and that the other people have to act as beggars towards you. Some of these people became killers because they had heard such stories and they just wanted to get rid of the enemy. Did they know their real enemy? They have been made to believe that the enemy is their neighbor who does not have a nose that looks like theirs. This sounds stupid, and yet, that is what happened. Imagine living in such a world! If you were there, you would probably have been targeted, either because you happened to have a long nose, or because you happened to sympathize with one specific ethnic group.

People have heard about the Rwandan genocide because the media made a great fuss about it. What we should bear in mind is that, other people from other countries like the DRC, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, have suffered the same fate. During our recent short visit to DRC, we were informed about the kinds of atrocities that Katangese troops that belonged to Kabila's army inflicted on the Nande people in Butembo. A group of Katangese would enter a house, ask the members of the family to gather in a given spot, and then, they would oblige the son to kill the father or the father to kill the son in the presence of the other family members. Sometimes, they would oblige the male members of the family to dig a pit, then either the father, or the mother would be told to enter that pit, and they would thus bury him alive. We have often heard that Rwandans have a genocide mind. But the atrocities that the Katangese troops inflicted onto the people in Butembo were far more deplorable than what happened during the genocide in Rwanda.

As a way of humiliating the Congolese, we have also heard that, often times, the rebel groups would use rape as a war tool. Here, we are not talking about a woman being raped because she was caught alone in a secluded place. It seems that, girls as young as 10 years old would be raped in the presence of their parents. Imagine that you are such a parent! Or such a child! Or the brother or sister of such a child! Because these atrocities have taken place in several war zones in sub-Saharan Africa, and it does not matter whether the victims belonged to your ethnic group or not, it is high time that we strongly condemn such atrocities and take steps to redress the situation by working for the promotion of a culture of peace among the African people.

You have certainly also heard about cannibalism that was used by rebel groups in some areas of northern Kivu, DRC, as a war tool. It has been alleged that pygmies were the targets of this cannibalism. What we should bear in mind is that pygmies are human beings like you and me. You could have been born a pygmy, just as you were born white, black, yellow. Would you ever accept that people of your ethnic group be the victims of such cannibalism just because of some weird ideas that the cannibals would acquire supernatural powers?²³

Another area that presents a grim picture of people's lives in various parts of the world is the situation of divorce. Unfortunately, children are the obvious victims. They no longer have a positive model within their family that would guide them properly into becoming responsible adults. Women also become often victims in a divorce because of their inability to sustain themselves.

Some resort to prostitution, which leads to AIDS and their ultimate death, and the orphanage of children with its multiple consequences. Notice that, when you get married, you cannot always be sure that you could never divorce. It would therefore be desirable that we ponder about the deep reasons that bring these grim situations of war and divorce in our societies as a prerequisite for learning how to promote a culture of peace.

Explaining the causes for such grim situations

War is certainly the primary cause for all kinds of atrocities committed against innocent people. A close analysis of these wars often reveals that they are often provoked by warlords for their personal gains. Take the situation in DRC. It is difficult to imagine how a tiny country like Rwanda would dominate the big DRC. And yet, this has been rendered possible, not because Rwandans are such supernatural powers but because Rwanda or Uganda as well receives the assistance of real powers whose face is completely veiled. You will certainly recall that, recently, there has been a massacre of 160 Tutsi refugees in Gatumba, Burundi. Officially, the FNL (Front National de Liberation) has claimed responsibility. From the reports of the UN, other people have been involved in this massacre, notably the Mai-Mai rebels and the so-called Hutu Interhamwe, all coming from neighboring DRC. For people who know Gatumba and also Uvira, that is, the closest city that is in DRC and where the killers allegedly came from, it is difficult to explain why these killers were able to cross two police stations without being spotted and on their way back to Uvira, they were not caught. For people living in that region in DRC, they have never understood why only the Tutsi were asked to cross into Burundi and live in camps as refugees. For a long time, they had lived peacefully in Uvira with their Congolese neighbors. Why did they decide to cross just at a time when two things happened? First, it was alleged that Colonel Mutebusi, a Congolese Tutsi, started his revolt against the central government in Bukavu because Tutsi people had been killed in that city. When the information was checked, it was found out that some people did get killed, but the killings were not specifically targeted against the Tutsi population. Some days later, General Nkunda, a Congolese Tutsi from Goma also came to attack Bukavu for the same reason, notably to protect the Tutsi population. Unfortunately, no evidence was ever found that the Tutsi population was in danger, especially that, the RCD party which ruled the region was pro-Rwanda, more precisely pro-Tutsi. At least, for the people in the region, it became easier to understand why only Congolese Tutsi families from Uvira would be asked to go to Gatumba in Burundi. Unfortunately, they became massacred. But was not that massacre planned in order to justify the fact that the Tutsi population is unsafe in eastern DRC and therefore, countries such as Rwanda, or Burundi, should have a right to intervene directly in DRC? Isn't it easier to bribe the Mai-Mai, or the FNL or the Interhamwe and tell them to do the massacre? The world will thus know that the Tutsi were massacred by the Congolese. Most probably, the real cause for these massacres will never be known. The real powers to whom the war-like situation in DRC profits probably know the real sponsors of these massacres. The situation is not that different from the true origin of the so-called Rwandan genocide. It is true that many Tutsi got killed by Hutu militants. But

why were they killed? Who commandeered the shooting of the plane that carried president Habyarimana? Whoever planned this plane shooting knew that the Hutu would react violently against their Tutsi compatriots. The answer to these questions has never been given. Whether satisfactory answers will ever be found, what seems important is that, both the Tutsi and Hutu, and also the Congolese in eastern DRC who are being victims of this Tutsi-Hutu conflict in Rwanda and Burundi must learn that they are brothers and sisters. There are tiny groups of people who stage these conflicts, and if the people in this region learn to ignore their machinations, hopefully, they will cultivate a culture of peace among themselves.

Speaking about the personal gains of the warlords, in most cases, it is always natural resources that are at stake. This has been the case in Angola for decades where Jonas Savimbi was able to remain a powerful opponent because of the exploitation of diamond. DRC is certainly a case in point where the population has simply become a victim of its natural resources. Here, external powers are interested in getting coltan, diamond, and lately petroleum. Therefore, wars are provoked to allow a lawless situation that provides a fertile ground for evil forces to exploit those natural resources.

The accomplices for the warlords are often people or institutions believed to hold very good intentions. But they are manipulated. Think about the United Nations. In the case of DRC, it has often been alleged that their agents are utterly manipulated by the Rwandan government which has succeeded to infiltrate many Rwandans, mostly beautiful girls, into its structure. Be it in Kinshasa or in Bukavu, you would find Rwandan girls as UN agents. This explains a lot of things. For example, in the case of the massacres in Kisangani some two or three years ago, it seems that the soldiers who staged them used MONUC (Mission des Nations Unies au Congo) planes. Notice also that no serious investigation has ever been made against the APR (i.e. the Rwandan Patriotic Army) of Kagame, and yet, the TPR, that is, the UN tribunal in charge of judging the genocide in Rwanda) has been active to solely judge Hutu groups. Millions of deaths that occurred in DRC are simply ignored. Mandela who is regarded as the most influential person with the very best intentions did work actively to try to oust Kabila (for the interest of his American cronies. He might deny it, but his conscience tells him that he was acting on behalf of other powers.)

It is difficult to imagine that religious authorities are out of this manipulation. Material wealth, often called "mammon," is another god that people of all faiths worship, albeit not officially. Several examples can be found in religious organizations. The mere mention of the cause of Pope John Paul I should tell us a lot about the Catholic religion for instance. Most probably, this pope was assassinated because he was a "real godly" man and that he wanted to reform the Vatican structure and the Catholic Church in general to make it espouse the ideals of the Christian faith, not simply in words, but also in deeds (Yallop 1984).

In these war-like situations, "hit people" are used. These are like machines, with no will of their own. They are simply manipulated by the warlords. In fact, they are also victims of the situation. Consider the case of

Rwanda: we are certain that 90% of Rwandans, Hutu and Tutsi alike, are against the grim massacres being staged by the APR in DRC. These are Christians, often very sincere Christians. But they just feel powerless in doing something to avert this massacre. We are equally 99% sure that Kagame's own wife, a Christian, is against this and also that Kagame himself does not like the situation, but, most probably, he is "blinded" by these other powers who "fuel" his actions by pouring money into his coffers and indirectly encourage him to continue massacring the populations in this neighboring country.

What possible solutions to grow seeds of a peace culture in such a war-torn world?

Notice that, if we really intend to find a solution to avert these grim situations, we must first recognize that, any evil is always the result of an idea that the perpetrator seeks to put in practice. The challenge is: how to ensure that such perpetrators do not put such evil ideas into practice? We believe that it is useless to condemn them because this will not accomplish anything. They are powerful and they can manipulate the opinions of decision makers in their favor. Often times, religious authorities who are supposed to encourage them to do positive things for their people will blind themselves (we do not know if this blindness is on purpose or if it is a way for them to also maintain their own egotistical material interests).

A proposal in *Wish I had known* (Mutaka & Bolima 2004) that might work here as well is to appeal to individuals' conscience to start doing the right thing for themselves. The idea is the following. However powerful one might be, one thing is sure, you will die and leave the material wealth you amassed behind. Most probably, your God will ask you to account for your life on earth in order to decide where you will be spending your after-life. We are not asking you to challenge this proposal. Reading it in the "prologue" of *Wish I had known* might convince you of its veracity. Our hope is that, if leaders who influence their people, sometimes, unknowingly, into doing evil things or not, may want to think more of their own after-earth life situation and decide to exert their power in the way their God intended them to do it.

When we die, whoever we might be, probably we are equal in the eyes of God, our ultimate judge. It does not matter whether you were a Pope, or a taxi driver, or the president of the United Nations Security Council. You will probably be asked the question of what you did of your earthly life? On the basis of your own answer, God will then tell you to join the group where you fit. Our appeal to the notion of "conscience" here simply means that, when God created us, he inscribed into our hearts, the so-called ten commandments of the Bible. You might try to deny this, but, as a human being, you certainly know the difference between evil and good and you also know that you should not do evil to other human beings. You also know what evil means. Just to refresh your mind, we just want to exemplify the possible evils you may have neglected:

- You are responsible of an institution and you manage public funds intended for example to fight AIDS in your country. However, because of your egotistical interests, you create artificial problems for allocating such funds unless the users find a way to pay you personally for the public service you are supposed to render.

- You rape girls in the presence of their parents because your chief asked you to do so to humiliate these parents. And yet, you should know that God will ask you to account for such rapes at your death. But you ignore this internal call in order to satisfy your chief.
- You decide to bomb the “twin towers” in New York City, as a way to play a dirty trick to these Americans, by using their own planes, just because you have been told that, were you to die as a “kamikaze” in such a bombing, you will go to paradise. You never ask yourself this question: what kind of God will tell me that I deserve to go to paradise because I have succeeded to shatter and destroy the lives of many individuals, including Muslim individuals like yourself? What about the ineffable misfortune that the families of the victims of such bombings will undergo? Will your God see this as the best way for you to enter paradise and will God view the shattering of the other individuals’ lives as irrelevant because your life is far more important than anybody else’s? We hope you know that this is not the God you really believe in. It is certainly not the God who will ask you to account for your earthly life upon your death in order to decide which group of people you should join in the after-life world.
- You are a civil servant and you attribute yourself huge amounts of money by creating government-paid fake missions. You belong to the inner circle of government people who get huge salaries in a country where people live in abject conditions because of public funds mismanagement. A clear case will better illustrate this. One civil servant from a francophone African country told us that, a PDG (i.e. a government company director) gets 750 US dollars daily when he goes on mission. If he chooses to travel with any member of his family, his wife gets 350 US dollars and each child gets 150 US dollars. The hotel bill as well as the food will still be paid by the government company. There are also other government companies where the members are paid 1000 US dollars for merely participating at the monthly meeting. Notice that the members of the government company he was talking about were not Africans only. There were Europeans among them. He ensured us that the information was true because he succeeded to become a member of one such government company. He also told us that, although he himself is not a PDG, he gets 500 US dollars daily when he goes on mission for his company. Note that this is a country where, officially, a University professor’s monthly salary is about 100 US dollars. To survive, it seems that university professors oblige their students to pay their courses and if you do not pay the course, you will not get a grade from him. We wonder why foreign organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank do not exert pressure on the leaders of such countries to take drastic measures that would render their finances more transparent and safe. We wish foreign individuals of good will whose countries have been pouring money in these countries under the guise of bilateral or multilateral cooperation to obtain reliable information on (a) the salaries of the ministers and

other top government officials of such countries, (b) the system that allows them to siphon out money, for example through the organization of fake missions in foreign countries or the organization of conferences whose real motivation is to find a way of spending the money that the international organizations pour into their countries. Our bet is that they will realize that, to a certain extent, they have been contributing, unknowingly, to worsen the situation in these countries because they have never forcefully denounced the mismanagement of public funds to the right decision makers of their own countries likely to make things change in these African countries.

- Circumstances have conspired to make of you the president or an elected official of your country. You are fully aware of man-made causes of poverty in your country. Most often, your closest collaborators are the ones who ruin the country because of the deep-ingrained practices of corruption. You condone their actions and do not take any steps to straighten up the situation. And yet, you still ask people's votes and you make them believe that you are the best choice of the Christians or the Muslims in your country. You make sure that your people regularly see you at church or in the mosques. Our wish is that your conscience tells you to act less hypocritically and serve the people who put you in that office because, soon or later, you will have to account for your actions upon your death.
- You are the president of the most powerful nation on earth. You know that you can exert a decisive influence on the leaders of some African countries not to perpetuate evil on their neighbors. But you choose not to do it because you believe this will not have any bearing to your own re-election. Worse still, you choose to ignore the evidence that tells you that some of these leaders you support are using the money you give their countries to kill their own populations or their neighbors. And yet, you make everybody believe that you are a very sincere Christian. The Pope is your friend. You make sure that, before you stage a war on a given country, your soldiers seek the protection of your God in order to win the war. We hope that, somewhere, this God will tell your conscience to also act in the best interest of the numerous people who feel weak and hope that your intervention in their African countries, may help alleviate some of the evils they feel are being perpetrated against them.
- You are the Secretary General of the UN. You know that you can ask the leaders of the nations to take a decisive action to punish the people who commit rapes as a war tool. And yet, you do not do anything because there are more urgent issues you are dealing with in New York City. One might even wonder what your real priorities are. Is it to allow various leaders and organizations to siphon out the UN money by organizing conferences, paying very high hotel bills to the organizers, or very high salaries to your own staff in various countries as if you are mocking the workers in those countries that what they do for the benefit of their people is not as important as what your UN staff does

in those countries? And you do nothing for these girls who are raped, for these millions of people who are displaced from their land because of a war that has been staged by some of your friends who sit in the UN and with whom you sip peacefully your champagne while these hundreds of millions of people are being killed. We hope that we can all wake up and know that we should perhaps do more justice in this world, just to make sure that our own judge will not tell us that we abused the power he so gracefully bestowed upon us.

As for the families torn by divorce and other evils, we also believe that commonsense together with the will to “love your neighbor as you love yourself” as proposed in the dedication of *Wish I had known* (Mutaka & Bolima 2004) might operate miracles. We just want to report the following facts recounted to us by Cameroonian students during a sociolinguistics class.

One of the students, from the Bamileke ethnic group, said that, for the sake of enhancing a culture of peaceful co-existence between people in Cameroon, he would feel most happy if he were to be polygamous and have women from several Cameroonian tribes in his harem. All the girls in the class applauded him. One of the girls even said that this way of creating peace has always been used by our ancestors. Most of the time, a chief would make sure that he creates strong alliances with other chiefs by getting married to their daughters. The students gave the case of Gabon and Congo as two countries that can never go to war because President Omar Bongo of Gabon is married to the daughter of President Sassou Nguesso of Congo Brazzaville. The implication for this way of encouraging peace between our African nations was that, maybe, our leaders should think of creating more powerful alliances with other leaders. Inter-marriage would certainly be a powerful incentive. At the same time, since we are aware of the dangers of AIDS for polygamous people, the students believed that, proposals suggested in *Wish I had known* (Mutaka & Bolima 2004) about living as a partner in a polygamous family regarding one’s sexual behavior would be helpful. One such suggestion was that, the husband allows the woman to have a secret boyfriend with whom he can have sex just in the case where she feels that their common husband does not satisfy her sexually.

It was also agreed that, most conflicts among people might arise from the differences in their cultures. It was for example observed that, in the Bamileke culture, it is more expected of a man to be polygamous. That is what the society encourages. Women are viewed as precious objects and a man is expected to marry as many women as possible to prove that he is powerful. And yet, because of the influence of schooling and western-imported religions, it is believed that monogamy should be the norm. As a consequence of this, a Nugunu girl said that she would be utterly shocked if her fiancé were to propose her to sign a marriage contract under a polygamous status. In such a situation, a Bamileke girl said that, in her own case, she knows that she would readily accept the polygamous status, knowing at the same time that she will live a monogamous relationship with her husband as long as she is true to him. Another reason in support for such a position, also given by a Bamileke boy, was that, if the girl were to force her husband to sign for a monogamous status, very

probably, she will have marital problems created by her neighbors. This is a society where witchcraft is rampant and, as an African society, one cannot deny its powerful influence on people. It would be easy for example for sorcerers to render such a woman barren so as her husband might be obliged to chase her and thus marry another woman who will beget children for their society. The gist of this is that commonsense must also guide people's actions. If the two partners can truly live their vows, especially, in the light of the pieces of advice given in the *Fruit of love* (Mutaka 2001), namely that a husband should consider his partner as the best gift from God and that, at every circumstance, each of the partners has to promote the self-esteem of his mate, couples will probably live a stable marriage life despite the official monogamous or polygamous status of their marriages.

Evaluation and conclusion

Given these proposals, we would like to say a few words on the solutions that have been often proposed in international and regional conferences on how to create peace among nations.

One proposal has been the creation of "forces of rapid intervention" which would be placed in a given country (see for example an article on internet entitled "creation d' une force de réaction rapide ouest-africaine" www.ufctogo.com/breve.php3?id_breve=198). It should be observed that they cannot be rapid enough because of logistics problems. Also, a standing army is to be paid and it is difficult to maintain it when there are so many other economic problems. For an army to become operational in a different country, it needs at least three months to be fully deployed on the terrain. Unfortunately, the conflicts will have ravaged the country. With a restricted number of soldiers, such a "rapid force" would simply feel powerless as has been the case of the MONUC in Bukavu for example.

Even if the idea of a force of rapid intervention were to be accepted, one should also think about the relationship between the leaders. Problems will certainly arise if such an army were to invade the country of a friendly head of state, although he may not be liked by his people.

Another alternative is to put the countries under the protection of western armies. But this is not a nice solution for national pride reasons. And yet, how proud are our governments when we know that, before making the cabinet of their ministers public, their leaders sometimes check with the western powers if such ministers are acceptable? And when there are problems, they always appeal to these western powers.

The solution could be to create a situation where these western powers talk to each other and decide who should do what. Negotiations would thus replace the armies. They already have such organizations as CIA or Interpol. These could get information on the companies of the people who stage wars and have them tried in western tribunals and, if found guilty, be fined heavily so as to discourage them. The western powers could be employing the funds from the penalties of such warlords to assist financially these African countries for rebuilding their economies. This is certainly an idea that might easily succeed if

high-level decisions supported by the United Nations and by the great powers, which are the great providers of armament, are implemented.

The solution proposed in this paper, namely that of appealing to the individuals' conscience to do good, remains the most valid: it is difficult to deny that we will die and we will be judged by the Most High. Maybe the western powers could convince our leaders about the veracity of this and encourage them to further change their minds for doing the right things for their populations. At a more personal level, maybe you can do this experiment: take a pin and prickle yourself with it. Leave it in your body for about 30 seconds. We bet you will not try it because you know the pain it will cause you. And yet, whatever evil you have been causing to your neighbors, that is the same way that they suffer because they are human beings like you. We hope this experiment will make you realize that, soon or later you will die. You will leave behind all the riches you have amassed fraudulently and there is a supreme judge who will ask you to account for your life on earth. Shouldn't you take a very personal decision to henceforth avoid evil and devote your life to the promotion of a culture of peace among the people you may influence? Our bet is that you will even feel better about your own life if you decide to do so.

Note:

²³ It is not clear that this cannibalism took place because of recent official news that this may not be true. At the same time, the source for this news of cannibalism is a reliable source, notably, the bishop of Butembo-Beni, as a Catholic priest personally told me, during my short visit to Butembo in December 2003.

References

- Mutaka, Philip (2001) *The fruit of love*, Yaounde: Editions SHERPA
Mutaka, Philip & Flora A. Bolima (eds.) (2004) *Wish I had known*, Yaounde: Editions SHERPA
UFCtogo.com. (2004) 'Création d'une force de réaction rapide ouest-africaine' in UFCtogo.com.
Yallop, David (1984) *In God's name*, London: Gorgi Books.

Literacy texts

The various texts we propose below are meant to be used in high schools as language teaching material. The teacher should adapt them to his/her own classroom situation, depending on the goals of his/her language class: e.g., finding specific information in a text, skimming a text, organizing a dialogue out of a text, rewriting a text by introducing extraneous information, improving or updating the contents of the text, etc. We also hope that such texts can be translated in local languages and be used as literacy texts and, most importantly, be presented to peasants who might find them useful in that they address their real needs. These texts would thus constitute a bridge between formal education and real life as experimented in African villages.

Help from traditional medicine

P. MUTAKA, L. ATTIA, & N. KIMBI

One observation Nathan Kimbi who is a biomedical specialist in Cameroon made (personal communication) is that people living in the villages do not always have recourse to medication found in pharmacies. When they are sick, they always find relief from the use of medicinal plants. As reported in *Wish I had known* (Mutaka and Bolima 2004:202), Kimbi has succeeded to treat a number of AIDS patients using traditional medicine. As indicated in the book, there are 26 opportunistic diseases related to the HIV/AIDS virus that he also treats. We thought it worthwhile to interview him in order to obtain information how to treat common diseases. Since we intend the contents of this paper to be available to village people and to be translated in local languages, we will be writing the instructions we collected from him under subtitles of diseases that he treats with traditional medicine. Just in the case where he is not the source of a given treatment, we mention our source for it. We also mention some medicinal plants or products that are useful for treating several diseases.

Cough caused by cold

Buy a small red fruit called *Ndong* in Basaa and which contains black seeds that taste like pepper when you crack them. Take 3 to 5 seeds, eat them. These *ndong* seeds contain medication that relieve the chest and help a great deal with a cough. They do not treat catarrh though.

Incidentally, as reported in *Wish I had known*, these seeds are also used as aphrodisiacs to help a man maintain a penile erection during lovemaking.

Cough

Grind ginger and garlic, boil until the liquid has dried off, let it cool. You can mix it with honey and lick it as often as possible. It is said to be a local antibiotic. (Source: Lilian Attia)

Treating impotence

Use the root of a banana plantain, pound it, boil it, and squeeze the juice out of it and drink it.

Snake bite

Use the hard skin of a coconut, light it in fire and use the black ash.

Also, note that what is usually called “la pierre noire”, that is the black rock that treats snake wounds is basically made of the horn or certain animals (like the cow) as it contains calcium. The Lord God put calcium in horns to help treat these snake wounds

Tooth decay

If a tooth decays, take the pit of an avocado, scrape it and make a paste from the scrapings. It is such a paste that you will be putting regularly on the decayed tooth. This medication contains ingredients that fight efficiently the germs that cause the tooth decay. It helps the flesh around the tooth grow again and thus allows the root of the tooth to get deeper into the body.

High blood pressure

Use groundnut peelings, boil them and squeeze them. When you leave them for a little while, they become brownish. Sift them in a cloth and drink the water squeezed out of those peelings.

An alternative treatment is to use orange flowers. You can also use tender leaves of the orange tree. Boil them and drink them.

You may also use the peelings of an orange, boil them and drink them. The water thus obtained stimulates circulation of blood in the body.

This concoction of orange peelings is also used to fight the stones in the blood, that is, the clots that prevent the circulation of the blood in the body.

Also, make sure you eat the correct food. For example, eat palm crude oil. Do not eat fried oil as this type of oil is not digested by the intestines. It remains fat in the body.

There are also some other foods that are useful: for example okra, water-leaves that you should be eating regularly

Back ache

This depends upon the origin of the backache. According to Kimbi, backache may be caused by the presence of a liquid or air into the back. It therefore needs to be drained out. However, for most backaches, they may be caused by insufficiency of calcium. In that case, the best medication is to eat food with calcium like cabbage. One can also use the outer skin of an egg. Alternatively, one can use animal bones, dry them, burn them into charcoal and be eating them. Note also that one can also use the cracking of kernels or horns by pounding them and making a powder out of them and then be eating them as they nourish the bones.

Diabetes

To fight diabetes, one can be preparing a concoction from pear leaves. Alternatively, one can be using one kilogram of the root of a pear and five liters of water.

How to get rid of fat, for example for a woman with a big stomach

To fight fat, use onions. There is a plant called “*kinka*” in Kimbi’s dialect (Ncane) that even works better to reduce the fat than onions.

Painful menses

One should use a concoction from “ginseng” and mix it with red wine. Such painful menses are usually caused by fungi in the vagina.

Irregular menstruation

Use aloe vera, or ginger, or else the *kinka* plant.

Hemorrhoids

Use aloe vera, also carrots and garlic. Potato red leaves are the main cure for hemorrhoids.

Constipation

Use roots of bahama grass, pound them, sift them and give the concoction to the patient.

Alternatively, one may use tender pear leaves (here pear means avocado) and mix them with red wine.

Measles

Use palm wine (see palm tree below)

Malaria

Use bitter leaves, squeeze them and give the juice to the patient. According to Kimbi, anything that is bitter is good for treating malaria. He uses a special treatment from a tree called synchona which is sour. It is the tree that he uses for preparing a concoction which is one element of his phytoquintherapy for the treatment of AIDS, notably, the synchokin syrup.

Tension

Use “*misep*,” that is, some type of local mint (i.e., menthe sauvage in French). It regulates tension in the body, and also cholesterol.

Alternatively, use lemon grass, known in Pidgin English as *fiba* grass (literally fever grass).

Lack of breast milk

Use the root of a palm wine tree (see below about the use of the palm tree)

Skin cancer

Use the phosphor found on the bark of a palm wine tree. Light it and burn the cancerous excrescence with it (see palm tree below).

Dysentery

Use the peelings of a mango (see mango tree below)

Diarrhea

Use the bark of a mango fruit (see mango tree below). Also use of water leaves (that look like spinach).

Amoebic infection

Boil fresh leaves of guava and drain the drink while the liquid is warm. Drink 1 cup 3 or 4 times daily. (Source: Lilian Attia)

Gastritis/heartburn

Get a few grains of dried groundnuts, chew and swallow. One could also chew a nut of bitter kola. (Source: Lilian Attia)

Anemia

Use potato leaves. Boil “*folere*” leaves with ginger, clou de girofle (sometimes heard in the local market of Yaounde as cour de *djirbum*) and pineapple peels; let it cool and add sugar to give it a good taste. You can drink it like that or chilled. For storage, it can be kept in the fridge for not more than two days. Drink frequently for best results. (Source: Lilian Attia)

Prostate problem

Use *okro* soup lightly cooked for the repair of bladder and ability to retain the urine. The vitamin k that it contains helps against the disease of the prostate.

Note the following about certain medicinal plants or medicinal products:

The ndong

It is also active against the witchcraft that the Basaa people of Cameroon may apply to bewitch someone

Kimbi says that it also serves as food for the brain in that it further stimulates the brain not to get tired. When he knows that he has to stay long hours before the computer, he sometimes cracks some of the *ndong* seeds to remain active.

It also treats swelling and boils.

The palm tree

It is the center of vitamin B 12. Several parts of this plant are useful. Thus:

- Its root serves for treating breast problems. When a woman does not have milk, use the roots of the palm tree, wash them, boil them and give the concoction to the woman in order for her to have breast milk
- The interior of its trunk is rich in Vitamin B12. If dried and made into powder, it can help nourish HIV patients
- On the bark, there is material that looks like hairs which, according to Kimbi, is phosphor. This material is very good for destroying skin cancer. You light it and then you burn the cancerous excrescence on the skin with it. The person will of course cries, but when it has touched that excrescence, the cancer no longer reappears.

The palm-wine

It is good for treating measles. What should be born in mind is that it facilitates digestion. According to Kimbi, what kills children is often constipation and not malaria for example. The caregivers must find ways to help the child excrete. Because palm-wine contains Vitamin B 12, it facilitates excretion and thus the child is able to get rid of germs. There is no danger of overdose for taking palm wine.

The palm oil: this is one of the treatments of HIV. What we should bear in mind is that when the HIV virus enters the body, it feeds on brain cells, and it consumes oil. That is why you have to feed an HIV patient with much oil, that is, literally pumping much oil in his system. It is very important that this be non saturated oil, that is, crude oil which has not been boiled. Following Kimbi's explanation, there are two types of palm oil. The first grade oil is the one that is obtained after pounding the palm oil nuts and putting them in the pit. It is this kind of oil that is excellent for the AIDS patients. As Kimbi also explained, the HIV virus succeeds to damage the body because it feeds on oil and oxygen. If you can provide enough water to the patient, as it contains oxygen and much non saturated oil, the HIV virus will not survive (while it will be attacked by the other kinds of medication that is contained in Kimbi's so called phytoquintherapy treatment).

The mango tree

- Its leaves, more particularly the tender ones are very effective for treating malaria.
- The dry leaves are also effective for treating tetanus.
- The peelings of its fruit are good for treating dysentery. Kimbi told us that when he eats a mango, he usually eats also the peelings because he knows that they help him avoid flatulence (that is, the noise the stomach sometimes produces).
- The seeds of the mango fruit are used to fight intestinal worms.
- The bark of the mango tree is also used for treating dysentery and diarrhea as it contains vitamin C. As Kimbi explained, when the bark of the mango tree is dried and turned into powder, it becomes brownish after a while. It contains a lot of iron and is an efficient medication against diarrhea.
- The roots of the mango tree are used to treat stomach problems, more particularly the fungi (i.e. what is called levures in French), and also dysentery and diarrhea.

The pawpaw tree (i.e. the papaya tree)

- Its leaves are used to treat malaria. According to Kimbi, some people cook leaves in the oil and eat them as vegetables. These leaves also treat typhoid.
- The green fruits of the pawpaw tree are also used to treat cancerous forms, more specifically the skin cancers, scabies, and also swellings.
- The green pawpaw seeds are also good for treating worms.
- The skin of the pawpaw is good for treating venereal diseases. However, as Kimbi pointed out, it is rather aloe vera which is the champion for treating chlamydia. He suggested that aloe vera is best used with oil to lower its "burning" power.

More help from traditional medicine

(The following information comes from a flyer written by Dr. Atta K. Bonsu of Osu-Accra, Ghana. Lilian M. Attia particularly recommends these concoctions as she has tried most of them and found them efficient.)

Gastric (stomach) trouble

Gastric troubles arise from eating and drinking harmful foods; and in general, wrong ways of treating the stomach.

Do not do the following:

1. Don't eat white sugar (use honey in its place)
2. Don't combine sugar and milk (this may cause constipation)
3. Don't take tea and coffee (caffeine content is dangerous to the stomach)
4. Don't take hot pepper (use onions, garlic, and green, sweet pepper in diet)
5. Don't take palm oil (it produces cholesterol; the stomach cannot digest food with plenty of oil; use very little oil, soya oil, and others)
6. Don't eat between meals (eat regularly: time after time)
7. Don't eat very late at night (by six PM you have eaten your supper)
8. Don't combine fruits and vegetables. (This may cause disturbances in the stomach. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables but separate them at separate meals)
9. Don't drink water with meals (wait one hour before and after meals)
10. Don't take alcohol (it causes serious irritation in an empty stomach)
11. Don't take fried foods
12. Don't take chemicalized (unnatural) drugs; they may worsen your case.

As for the medication: use the programme for three weeks to cure all gastric problems.

First week:

pluck one fresh green leaf of pawpaw: wash thoroughly and grind with 2 small cloves of garlic. Mix with water and sieve or filter to get a nice green juice. You can heat (not boil). Take $\frac{1}{2}$ a beer glass 3 times daily before meals (1/4 glass for children)

2nd and 3rd weeks:

Combine corn silk, green and brown leaves of pawpaw. (Dry them) in a pot, pour plenty (enough) water and boil for about 15 minutes. Drink one beer glass of the syrup (tea) 3 times daily before meals. (Add $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon juice and a tablespoon of honey to one glass of the medicine.)

Note that, if the medicine raises the pains, continue taking your medicine. The sickness is uprooted when the tension cools. (You can take in some charcoal to reduce pains)

Raw, green pawpaw leaf juice:

Pluck one green leaf of pawpaw. Wash it thoroughly. Grind or mash it. Mix with about 2 glasses of water. Strain well to get a nice green juice of pawpaw leaf. You can heat it on fire (not boil). You can drink it without heating or warming it. Drink $\frac{1}{2}$ beer glass 3 times daily before meals (for adults), $\frac{1}{4}$ for children. 3 tablespoons for children under one year. This medication cures: malaria, typhoid, colds, stomach ulcer (gastritis), hepatitis, bile problems, and fevers of all kinds; it kills germs and worms. It is also good for curing tuberculosis and cancer.

Note that “papain” in green pigment of pawpaw is an effective “antiseptic”. As for the dosage, one leaf a day for a matured person is enough.

Garlic, lemon and honey syrup

Take 20 fruits of lemon, 2 bulbs of garlic, $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of honey, and $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of pineapple juice (as a preservative). Squeeze out the juice of lemon; peel off the garlic and grind. Mix garlic with the lemon juice. Then, sieve or strain to get out all the pulp. Add the pineapple juice to the lemon and garlic juice. Bring to boil (simmer) on low fire for about 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, bring it down and add the honey. Send it back to the fire for about 5 minutes. Then let it completely cool before you preserve it in a well dried bottle.

For children under 1 year:

1 tablespoon 3 times daily before meals

For children 1-10 years:

2 tablespoons 3 times daily before meals

For adults:

3 tablespoons 3 times daily before means.

This concoction is recommended for all lungs problems such asthma, coughs, bronchitis, pneumonia, catarrh, cold, fevers; cardiovascular diseases like arteriosclerosis, hypertension, heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and menstrual disorders. It helps during severe heart palpitation and stomachaches. It is very good for tuberculosis and cancer.

Do not preserve in fridge as it will reduce its potency, but keep in cool place.

The container should be well dried in order not to ferment the medicine.

Corn silk, brown and green pawpaw leaves syrup (tea)

Combine corn silk with brown and green leaves of pawpaw. In a pot, pour plenty (enough) water over it. Boil for about 15 minutes. Squeeze $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon

juice into a beer glass of the syrup. Add one tablespoon of honey and drink. Take it 3 times daily before meals. Half dose can be given to children.

This concoction is recommended for: kidney problems, gonorrhea, syphilis and all venereal diseases. It is good for typhoid, malaria, hepatitis, and gastritis. It relaxes the nerves, veins, and arteries. Thus it helps in spinal problems, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, rheumatism, and arthritis. It solves menstrual problems and promotes pregnancy. It cleanses the liver, kidney and the brain; and melts tumor and blood clots and lumps. It cures constipation and piles; and it restores cancerous cells.

Note: Dry corn silk and green leaf of pawpaw before boiling. If corn silk is taken from already dried corn, it can be used without drying.

Also, at time, you can boil 2 leaves each of brown and green pawpaw and 2 handfuls of corn silk. Change it when the color disappears.

Getting involved in the fight against the spread of AIDS: brief comments on excerpts from *Wish I had known*

PHILIP MUTAKA

Wish I had known/Si je savais by Mutaka and Bolima (2004) is an AIDS prevention book that contains various messages likely to push us, as individuals, to adopt a safer sexual behavior. Because the book is somehow voluminous (297 pages for the English version and 318 pages for the French version), we thought it worthwhile to merely publish in this squib extended excerpts from the book with brief comments that can push us to ponder more about the AIDS pandemic and thus impel us to get involved in the fight against the spread of AIDS. These excerpts are meant to provide the quintessence of the whole book.

This first excerpt is from the “prologue.” It invites us to ponder about our own life in the light of the prevalence of the AIDS pandemic.

Imagine for a moment what your life might be in a year or two. Close your eyes and tell me sincerely what you find. Perhaps, your life will not change as is true for most people. But, for some people it will change dramatically. It is sad to recognize it, but some of us will carry the HIV virus because of some act we thought highly trivial when we made it. [...]

Let us suppose for a moment that, when we talk of a just God, it is because, upon one's death, God simply asks one to evaluate one's own life. One will then know where to go.

How did you imagine your life within two or five years? You have been undertaking certain acts that can lead you to perdition. You know that some of these acts might make you become a victim of AIDS. Imagine what will happen to your children! Your wife! Your husband! Yourself! Maybe your body will start disintegrating. You will be contemplating your own death, and the judgment that will be yours because of your actions. Of course, you might say that you will confess your sins. But suppose God does not want to forgive you because, in your case, you knew that your sins would lead you to perdition. You enjoyed your sins. You enjoyed causing harm to your fellow human beings. God simply tells you that you are reaping what you sowed.

Because you now see that you are actually the shaper of your own future life, you start saying: “I wish I had known.” If you did not really know, I believe God would be ready to forgive you. What if he tells you: I have sent you several signs to make you repent, as I knew you would be coming to me soon.

This book is one such sign. We do have the power in us to avoid perdition. We do have the power in us to avoid the AIDS pandemic. But also, we do have the power in us to improve our own life. (pp. 13-16).

An implied message from these excerpts is certainly addressed to seropositive people who spread the AIDS virus intentionally because, as is commonly explained, they do not want to die alone. They must also know that, upon their death, they will account for their criminal actions before their supreme judge.

This second excerpt is from the first chapter "Testimonies by AIDS victims."

As we read the following stories, we should bear in mind that they are recounted by people who were healthy like you and me. People who did not know that they would become AIDS victims. But they are today. What about us? Are we better than them? Their frame of mind while recounting their stories is certainly one of "wish I had known to take better care of myself in order to avoid falling in this pit." These stories are ours now. Maybe, our ultimate judge, upon our death, will remind us that we cannot give the pretext that we did not know what to do. These AIDS victims had the courage to tell us their personal misfortunes in order to help us be extremely cautious about the way we deal with everyday situations concerning our sexual behavior. (p.20)

As implied in this excerpt, readers will probably feel more compassion for the AIDS victims as they read the ten testimonies and they will also decide to maintain a more responsible sexual behavior as they realize that they can easily fall in the trap of AIDS as was the case of the AIDS victims in these testimonies.

This third excerpt is from chapter three and it targets decision makers. It essentially reminds us of the danger of the AIDS pandemic as it affects the economies of our countries. Notice that the end of the message contains the arguments that the Ambassador of the United States in Uganda used to convince President Yoweri Museveni that he should get involved in the fight against the spread of AIDS. The result is that Uganda is nowadays one of the success stories about this fight.

A message for decision makers

You have been wavering in your decision to fully support the AIDS-prevention campaign because you do not want to lose money. Consider the following statements from authorities of the World Bank who have pondered the problem:

The consequences of inaction with respect to HIV/AIDS and education: HIV prevalence worsens -> Teacher deaths increase,

teaching quality declines, orphans and out-of-school youth increase -> Illiteracy increases, skilled work force shrinks, quality human capital deteriorates -> Country's ability to compete in knowledge economy suffers -> Economic growth declines -> Public budget for health and education dries up -> HIV prevalence worsens. As you notice, this is a vicious circle (The World Bank 2002:10).

"HIV/AIDS increases education sector costs. On the supply side, budgets are having to accommodate higher teacher hiring and training costs to replace teachers who have died of AIDS, as well as the payment of full salaries to sick teachers who are absent and additional salary costs for substitute teachers" (The World Bank 2000: xviii)

If you are a chief executive officer, you can replace the term "teacher" by "employee" in the above quotations and imagine the rest of the sentences as the idea applies to your business. In the long run, you are killing your own business by not acting NOW. Even if your employees may not be sick, absenteeism will increase in case some family members are sick and that they have to take care of them.

"Common thinking was that this disease was principally a public health challenge. That was wrong: HIV/AIDS is reversing decades of development gains, increasing poverty and undermining the very foundations of progress and security" (The World Bank 2000: ix).

To protect your business, make sure your employees are fully aware of the economic, social, and psychological consequences of their sexual behavior. The present volume is a must for them to have access to for their own sake, the sake of their loved ones, and the sake of your own business. Hopefully, they will then join the efforts of the government to efficiently fight the spread of AIDS.

For the sake of posing the special act that may save lives, consider also the following points: (a) the grim prediction for the people you care for if the epidemic continues at its present rate and no effort is made to halt it (e.g. the death of loved ones, the loss of a parent means the loss of income for his whole family, etc.) (b) the number of orphans will increase: who will be caring for these orphans in your community? (c) knowing that AIDS is a deadly disease is not sufficient; posing an act that will push people to change their ways is what will make a difference. And you can do that. This is no longer the time for pretexts and prudishness. The situation is too serious. [...] Please also look at tables and figures in the annex to realize how alarming the situation has become. (pp.119-120)

This fourth excerpt is from “Useful figures for an HIV/AIDS sensitization campaign” (pp.207-210). It raises our awareness about the worst consequences of AIDS on education and also on the issue of orphans.

As observed in “Education and HIV/AIDS: a Window of Hope,” AIDS orphans are estimated to number 35 million by 2010 and that projections indicate that in 2010, 79 to 94 percent of orphans will be the result of AIDS mortality. As you know, orphans are most vulnerable children: “they suffer the trauma of seeing their parents die of AIDS, often become “orphaned” several times over as new caretakers also become infected, fall victim to malnutrition and stunting, and risk becoming street children” (The World Bank 2002:16).

Maybe you should have a kind thought for these orphans and say to yourself that they are not that much different from your own children. They have not been created orphans. And yet, as observed in a comment in The World Bank (2002:vii), many of them are growing without parents, without an education and without the knowledge and the resources to guide their choices in life. Their future partners may well be HIV-positive. If so, they too, voiceless and powerless, will become infected. And if they live long enough to have children, they will be unable to give them any better chance in life. If you love your children, you will certainly not want to precipitate them into a similar orphanhood by contracting AIDS through your carelessness.

Alarming Figures: Facts to consider to impel us to take a decisive action now:

Consider the figures mentioned in this quotation from Richard Feachem, the executive director of Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Washingtonpost.com, 2003):

Tuberculosis and malaria kill more than 3 million people per year, and AIDS kills another 3 million. These numbers are growing rapidly, dwarfing the number of people who could conceivably die from terrorism or conventional warfare. These three diseases are taking many countries backward, back to life expectancies and mortality rates the world hasn’t seen since the early 1900s. Each of them can be prevented, if not cured. Yet we spend billions trying to prevent terrorism and pennies in fighting these much bigger killers.

The worst-hit countries are in Africa. In parts of southern Africa, one out of every three adults is infected with HIV; without access to modern drugs, most will be dead within five years. Ten million

children have been orphaned by AIDS, enough to populate a country the size of Belgium and the figure will quadruple in this decade. Teachers in parts of southern Africa are lost to HIV/AIDS at twice the rate they are trained. Disease and premature death among farm workers is contributing to famine and starvation.

Did you also know that

“The cost of salaries for absent teachers, in Mozambique and Zambia, was some three times the cost of training to replace teachers who had died” (World Bank 2002:24)?

“The University of Zambia reported an average of three deaths a month throughout the 1990s, while the University of Nairobi is currently experiencing four to six deaths a month” (The World Bank 2002:14)?

“In Kenya teacher deaths rose from 450 in 1995 to 1,500 in 1999 (reported by the Teaching Service Commission), while in one of Kenya’s eight provinces 20 to 30 teachers die each month from AIDS (Gachuhi 1999)” as reported by The World Bank 2002:12?

This is frightening especially when we know that the death of a teacher deprives a whole class of children of education. Imagine such figures happening in your own university or school institution! We must more than ever act now to prevent the spread of AIDS.

This fifth excerpt is a useful comment from Farmer (1996:34-35) on the condoms and the necessity of spreading the right message about AIDS prevention.

“A related set of tasks concerns prevention. Making condoms readily available is an altogether insufficient response. Getting the right message across remains a priority and always will, as HIV is unlikely to be eradicated soon. This means that adolescents everywhere in the world simply must learn about STDs prior to become sexually active. Universal HIV education needs to become part of growing up, and might also help to attenuate AIDS-related stigma. Clearly, such efforts will need to be different in different settings, but the universal finality and obstinacy of AIDS have changed the way we think about sexuality and sexism, and teens throughout the world need to learn about the relationship between HIV transmission and social forces such as poverty and gender inequality” (p.54).

This sixth excerpt is useful for us to be aware of.

The snail and the dinosaur: who do you team up with?

Fighting the AIDS virus is ultimately a personal commitment. The following story of the snail and the dinosaur show that you have either to adapt to the situation or ...

When the air becomes dry, the snail hides into its shell until the next rainy season. That is what we call living in one's season. Some animal species, such as the dinosaur, have disappeared because they did not adapt to the changes of their milieu. They were not able to live with the changes of their time.

For man, the situation is similar. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the air has become dry out there. The dry air is precisely AIDS, the disease that destroys the natural defenses of the organism and which exposes the contaminated person to all sorts of infections. Given the presence of AIDS in our daily atmosphere, people who have been able to live by adapting themselves to the changes of their time, just like the snail, have returned into their shells of fidelity and abstinence. The chance for them to contract AIDS is really very low. Other people, who are equally smart and who cannot bear the idea of remaining in their shells during several months like the snail, wear a hat whenever they go out. That hat is the condom. Those who wear that hat before going out also have a low risk of contracting AIDS. Those who continue to go out frequently without wearing a hat are the most vulnerable. They still behave as if the air was not dry. Are you teaming up with the snail or the dinosaur? It's up to you to choose your team (p.68-69).

The following excerpts are catchy sayings from chapter 2.

"If you are not yet hurt, you cannot feel (measure) the degree of pains"
(Ghomala proverb, Djouonzo Bernadette Florette)

"Only a person unaware of the consequences of AIDS can say that he does not care"

Think about the despicable state of an HIV carrier at the late stage of the disease. Think also about the fate of the children one leaves behind. (Bamileke Proverb, Pouani A. Clark)

"He whose walk is blameless is kept safe, but he whose ways are perverse will suddenly fall." (Proverbs 28:18)

This proverb is a warning to most of us who live a double life: priests and pastors with secret concubines, married people who have extra-marital affairs, seminarians with secret sexual partners, etc. Maybe, it is high time to clarify our relationships, to make them

safer by retaining their positive side such as the real love for these friends with whom we live this double life.

This last excerpt is from “a sample of a sensitization campaign session” and it nicely concludes what we are supposed to do in our daily lives in order to make a difference in the fight against AIDS.

To conclude, we are going to summarize the messages that we find important. We are forcefully telling everybody:

- to not be indifferent towards the AIDS problem
- -to not believe that you, as an individual, are invulnerable with respect to the AIDS virus
- to not be incredulous towards the existence of AIDS
- to not feel ashamed or be afraid to check and make sure that your partner is safe
- for couples, to always remain faithful to each other
- for singles, abstinence may be our best tool to fight the AIDS virus
- for promiscuous people: to always use condoms
- to not be ashamed or afraid to require the use of new razor blades when you go to the traditional healer to get yourself “shielded” or to the barber.
- to not feel ashamed to declare that someone you know died from AIDS (pp.286-287)

Notice that the above quotations constitute a foretaste of the entire book. Our hope is that readers will strive to read it for their own protection, the protection of their families, and also the protection of the economies of their countries. As said in the preface that will appear in the second edition of the book,

- 70% of all the AIDS cases are in sub-Saharan Africa. These are not simple statistics. These are human beings who have their families and children and who are affected by the AIDS virus.
- In countries where the seroprevalence is not high yet, it is imperative that they become aware that, if nothing is done, seroprevalence will rise as is the case in a number of southern African countries where it reaches a third of the adult population. Fighting AIDS is a way of protecting one’s loved ones from suffering and from the numerous expenses one would necessarily incur in case someone in the family were to get infected with the HIV/AIDS virus.

Because of all these reasons, we must meet the challenge raised in this book to pose a special act that will make a difference in the aggressive fight against the AIDS pandemic. Let us find ways to

make people read this book. Let us disseminate it all over sub-Saharan Africa. The fight is ultimately ours. For our own survival, we must fight until we win. Spreading the prevention message is our surest means to protect our own families and our national economies from the scourge of the AIDS pandemic.

References

- Farmer, Paul, Margaret Connors, & Jamie Simmons (eds.) (1996) *Violence, poverty and AIDS: sex, drugs, and structural violence*, Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press.
- Gachuhi,D. 1999. 'The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education Systems in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region and the Response of Education Systems to HIV/AIDS: Life skills Programs.' Paper prepared for UNICEF presentation at the sub-Saharan Africa Conference on EFA 2000, 6-10 December 1999, Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Mutaka, Philip & Flora Bolima (eds.) (2004) *Wish I had known*, Yaounde: Editions Sherpa.
- Mutaka, Philippe & Flora Bolima (eds.) (2004) *Si je savais*, Yaoundé: Editions Sherpa.
- World Bank (2000) *Intensifying Action against HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to a Development Crisis*, Washington, D. C.
- World Bank (2002) *Education and HIV/AIDS: a Window of Hope*, Washington, D.C.

La quête d'une eau potable: le cas du village Bafou

NGUETSE MEZATIO TSAGUE HERMINE

Bafou, l'un des villages environnants de la ville de Dschang, département de la Menoua, province de l'Ouest est une région qui malgré sa situation géographique propice aux pluies, donc à de l'eau, manque cruellement d'eau potable.

De prime abord le constat que l'on fait est que les foyers n'ont pas d'eau courante. Ainsi, les populations s'approvisionnent dans les puits, (autour des concessions) les sources et les rivières du village. Cependant cette eau ne semble pas toujours être idéale à la consommation car le fait est évident: les personnes malades dans cette localité souffrent généralement

- de maladies hydriques contractées en buvant de l'eau contaminée ou en y lavant la nourriture, les ustensiles, les mains ou le visage. Ce sont la fièvre typhoïde, le choléra, la dysenterie, la gastro-entérite, (diarrhée) et si la contamination est particulièrement importante, l'hépatite virale
- de maladies propagées par une mauvaise hygiène personnelle qui atteignent les yeux et la peau d'individus qui utilisent des eaux souillées pour prendre leur bain. Ce sont entre autres: le trachome, (conjonctivite virale qui peut, si elle n'est pas traitée, entraîner la cécité par l'atteinte secondaire de la cornée et la formation de cicatrices opaques), la gale, le pain, la lèpre, la conjonctivite, les dermatoses prurigineuses et les ulcérations de la peau.
- de maladies transmises par des vecteurs et contractées près de l'eau. Les moustiques (vecteurs du paludisme, de la filariose et de la fièvre jaune) et les simules (vecteurs de l'onchocercose ou cécité des rivières) se reproduisent dans l'eau.
- de maladies d'origine aquatique, dont le vecteur est un invertébré aquatique. La plus répandue est la bilharziose.
- la diarrhée, nous revenons la dessus, tue beaucoup d'enfants dans la localité. Ceux-ci meurent souvent de déshydratation, ou en sortent si affaiblies qu'ils demeurent exposés à d'autres maladies. Dans les conditions d'hygiène insuffisante, la maladie se transmet facilement d'un enfant à l'autre.

Comme nous le constatons, les populations du village Bafou souffrent essentiellement de maladies dues à l'absence d'eau potable accessible à tous.

Cependant, pour venir à bout de cette impasse ou du moins limiter les dégâts, l'apport des autorités traditionnelles, des élites du village et des populations elles-mêmes est essentiel à plus d'un titre:

- protéger et entretenir les puits et les points d'eau existants, car l'on constate souvent que les lieux d'approvisionnement en eau sert également d'abreuvoir aux bêtes et de buanderie pour les lessives.
- créer des nouveaux points d'eau, des puits aménagés surtout dans les zones de forte densité

- enseigner ou diffuser les règles d'hygiène car les populations doivent être en alerte et conscientes du fait que, pour se protéger contre les maladies, il faut toujours utiliser une eau propre.

Que faut-il donc faire pour avoir une eau potable?

Lorsqu'une famille n'a pas l'eau courante comme c'est le cas dans le village, elle peut réduire les risques d'infection en protégeant sa réserve d'eau contre les microbes. Pour cela elle doit:

- couvrir les puits;
- maintenir les selles et les eaux usées loin à l'écart de la réserve d'eau destinée à la cuisine, à la boisson, à l'hygiène corporelle ou à la lessive
- maintenir aussi propres que possible les seaux, les cordes et les récipients utilisés pour puiser et conserver l'eau
- faire bouillir l'eau avant de la boire si elle ne provient pas d'une conduite d'eau potable
- Même si l'eau est claire, elle peut contenir des microbes. Il faut donc, si possible, porter à ébullition et laisser refroidir l'eau provenant d'une mare, d'une source, d'un puits, d'un réservoir. On peut également la désinfecter à l'eau de javel.
- Il est très important de faire bouillir ou de désinfecter l'eau que l'on donne aux bébés et aux enfants, car ils résistent moins bien aux microbes que les adultes.

How to raise rabbits

DJIDJI DOUDOU BÉATRICE

There are many activities which are intended to improve agriculture, animal farm or water supply in rural areas. We have chosen here to present the process of raising rabbits. The reason of our choice is the fact that the activity is not so expensive. In addition, rabbits are easy to raise. They multiply quickly and produce delicious meat. Their skins can be made into objects like hats and sandals; their manure can be used as fertilizers.

Preparing to raise rabbits: The place for raising determines the limit on the number of rabbits to be raised. It has to be adapted to the climate of the region and it can be large or small according to the targeted flock. Good hutches should be built and they should always be covered and clean. Every hutch should contain a male and two females, a manger for grass, leaves and water, feed dishes such as coffee tins. A breed of rabbit which grows more quickly has to be chosen for a good yield.

Caring for rabbits: When the hutches are ready, good rabbits should be checked from the market. The animals should be handled properly because they are sensitive and gentle. They should be well fed with protein (corn, peanuts, other seeds), vitamins, minerals, fiber (fresh leaves and grass). All that food is easy to find.

Breeding rabbits: A male (buck) can service about ten females (does). It should be used two or three times a week. The doe should be placed by the breeder in the buck's cage for mating. Two females (and a buck) can produce fifty and more little rabbits in one year. These new born are then raised in a hutch where they are warmed by the females (i.e., does) until a certain period.

Controlling the rabbit illnesses: hutches and their furniture should be kept very clean. Only fresh food should be eaten by the rabbits which should also be protected from intense sun, rain, and drafts. Sick rabbits should be put in quarantine. Rabbits' illnesses such as coccidiosis, cold, sore hocks, sore eyes or pneumonia should be prevented. Prevention is better than cure. Rabbits have to be constantly examined by a vet.

Killing the rabbit: When the young rabbits become mature to be sold, they may be killed to produce meat or they may be sold alive. The killing takes about three minutes, with a blow to the back of its neck. The skin is then pulled off its body and tanned following a certain technique.

Keeping records: The breeder(s) should have a record book to evaluate the production and the financial implications. It is important to keep a production schedule.

The activity of raising rabbits is beneficial, mainly in terms of financial means and nutrition. For such animal farm to impact and increase rural and even urban living standard, communities should create groups or associations of rabbit breeders and organize the activity. Some other activities should also be integrated to it because development does not limit itself to raising rabbits as a socio-economic activity with educational, professional, agricultural, and sanitary aspects.

Projet pour élevage des poules pondeuses

LEOPOLDINE VOUTSA

Introduction

Le but visé par ce projet est la lutte contre la pauvreté en milieu rural Bamendou et l'amélioration des conditions de vie des populations de cette région du Cameroun. Le projet n'a pas la prétention d'éradiquer la pauvreté d'un coup de bâton magique, mais il a l'ambition d'améliorer le pouvoir d'achat des éleveurs, de contribuer à l'autosuffisance alimentaire des populations et d'améliorer la production alimentaire dans la région.

Le local

Pour 500 sujets, il faut construire un local de 200 m² de surface

Matériaux de construction:

- Bambous de raphia
- lattes + chevrons
- clous + tôles
- sable + ciment pour le sol

Coût

- clous: environ 30.000F
- tôles: 3500F X 60 tôles: 210.000f
- ciment: 1 camion: 25.000f

NB. La plupart des villageois possèdent une parcelle de terre parfois avec des arbres et quelques pieds de raphias.

Aménagement du local

Il faut recouvrir le sol de paille ou de sciure de bois et construire un hangar d'1 m de haut avec des bâches que l'on peut fabriquer en se servant de sacs vides. Il faut ensuite aménager les abreuvoirs, les mangeoires et les pondoirs.

NB. On peut également se servir de bois pour les mangeoires et de bambous pour les étagères de ponte.

Commande de poussins d'un jour

Lorsque le local est aménagé, passer la commande des poussins en même temps que leurs vaccins, l'aliment complet pour le démarrage, des vitamines et les médicaments. Il faut également prendre les précautions suivantes:

- désinfecter le sol à l'aide du crésyl
- mettre à l'entrée du poulailler une solution désinfectante qu'on change une fois par jour
- Eviter les bruits autour du poulailler.

3. Poulets d'un jour: démarrage + chauffage

Chauffage

Mettre environ 8 lampes tempêtes dans le hangar de chauffage, surveiller nuit et jour et les disperser s'ils sont trop entassés, pour qu'ils ne s'étouffent pas. Surveiller la température qui doit être à 31/33 degrés à leur arrivée. A partir du huitième jour, la ramener à 29/31 degrés et au 22e jour à 24/28 degrés

Démarrage

Démarrer avec l'aliment complet vendu dans les provenderies uniquement.

Coût

Nous laissons le soin aux utilisateurs de cet article d'évaluer le coût car cela dépend des moyens financiers dont l'on dispose et de la valeur de la monnaie nationale du pays.

4. Alimentation

Poussins d'un mois

A ce niveau les poussins sont à mesure de supporter les aliments composés localement. Le fermier peut donc mélanger les aliments suivants: maïs, coquilles, proto de coton, proto de soja, remoulage.

NB. En dehors du maïs, tous ces produits se vendent dans les provenderies. Si le fermier ne cultive pas assez de maïs, il peut en trouver sur les marchés locaux à très faible coût.

Poussins de 5 mois (poulettes)

Il faut les préparer à la ponte. On remplace simplement l'aliment remoulage par un autre concentré, le concentré-ponte que l'on trouve à la provenderie. Ils consomment le concentré-ponte pendant 1 mois et commencent à pondre.

Les pondeuses (6 mois)

Continuer le concentré ponte pendant 6 mois. C'est au cours de cette période que la ponte a lieu. Redoubler de surveillance pour que les oeufs pondus ne soient pas ensuite dévorés à cause de la famine ou simplement cassés au contact des autres. Les ranger soigneusement dans des alvéoles et commencer la ponte.

Les réformés (12 mois)

A 12 mois la ponte baisse sensiblement, la plupart de poulets ne pondent plus. Continuer à les nourrir serait du gaspillage. Alors commence la vente des poulets réformés.

NB. Les poulets les plus légers sont ceux qui ne pondent plus ou tout au moins plus assez régulièrement.

5. Santé

Le fermier doit être assisté par un vétérinaire qui interviendra pour la vaccination des sujets sains et le traitement des sujets malades. Le vétérinaire sait quels vaccins administrer, à quel moment et quelle dose administrer.

Le fermier doit surveiller les sujets de près pour intervenir à temps en cas de maladie. Il doit signaler au plus vite et avec précision toute anomalie rencontrée. Les principales maladies sont:

- la coccidiose (diarrhée rouge)
- la pullorose/ typhose (diarrhée blanche)
- parasites intestinaux (diarrhée jaune)
- maladies microbiennes (diarrhée verte).

NB.

- Interdire l'accès au poulailler à tout étranger
- Essuyer les pieds sur la solution désinfectante avant d'entrer au poulailler.

6. Main d'oeuvre

Bamendou est un village où la polygamie n'est pas une exception, mais la règle. Les familles ont au moins 2 femmes et en moyenne 10 enfants. La main d'oeuvre est donnée. Les membres de la famille peuvent s'organiser selon leur disponibilité et assurer le travail au poulailler à tour de rôle. Au cas où les membres de la famille ne peuvent pas le faire, les villageois peuvent s'organiser par petits groupes de 3 à 4 personnes pour lancer le projet.

7. Conclusion

L'élevage des poules pondeuses est utile à plus d'un titre dans cette région.:

- Il rapporte de l'argent au fermier
- Il met de la viande et des oeufs à la disposition des villageois, véritable moyen de lutte contre la malnutrition qui menace beaucoup de familles dans la région
- Il met à la disposition des agriculteurs du village des engrais naturels à moindre coût, ce qui permet de nourrir le sol déjà très pauvre du fait des cultures répétées et du manque de jachère.
- Il occupe enfin les villageois et les détourne de l'oisiveté et du chômage.

L'industrie d'œufs et des poussins

KOUANKEM CONSTANTINE

Il ne m'est jamais arrivé de manger des œufs dans mon village pour la simple et bonne raison qu'il n'y en a pas assez.

En fait, le peu d'œufs que la poule de la maison pond doit être laissé pour éclosion de sorte qu'il y ait plus de poussins possibles. Il n'est malheureusement jamais venu à l'esprit de personne que nous pouvions développer une industrie d'œufs. C'est-à-dire pouvoir multiplier la quantité d'œufs de sorte qu'on puisse en consommer sans risque de se faire réprimander et accroître en même temps la quantité de poussins.

Dans cette perspective nous avons rencontré un spécialiste en aviculture qui a bien voulu nous faire partager son secret.

Pour accroître la quantité d'œufs et de poussins, il est conseillé pour un début d'acheter une quantité suffisante de poules pondeuses, une cinquantaine environ. Le poulailler est nettoyé tous les matins, les abreuvoirs sous forme de bateau doivent toujours être pleins d'eau. Un espace est aménagé pour la ponte des œufs et pour celle des poules qui couvent, elles seront séparées des autres.

Certains éleveurs pour accroître la quantité d'œufs et de poussins utilisent une technique très spéciale que nous appellerons "le sevrage précoce". Le sevrage précoce consiste à éloigner la mère pondeuse de ses poussins deux à trois semaines après leur naissance de sorte qu'elle soit obligée d'aller vers un coq avant la période normale. Ceci accroît donc la moyenne de ponte d'œufs de quatre à cinq fois par an.

En ce qui concerne le repas des poules, l'éleveur peut soit se rendre chez les commerçants qui ont des machines à moudre le maïs et ramasser les résidus auxquels il adjoindra le soja écrasé; soit faire moudre lui même maïs et soja pour nourrir la volaille. Le soja sera préalablement grillé pour éviter de risques de maladie.

Les poules seront mises au soleil au moins trois fois par semaine, au mieux elles doivent sortir tous les matins et revenir le soir comme c'est le cas avec les poules du village. Mais en cas d'épidémie, séparer automatiquement les malades des saines et ne plus les laisser hors de leur hangar. Un vétérinaire sera contacté pour la consultation des poules chaque trimestre afin de s'assurer de leur bon état de santé.

Cette activité n'est pas conseillée à ceux qui répugnent le travail et la saleté.

La culture des champignons

BERTILLE DJOUEE

Les pygmées baka appartiennent à une société de chasseurs collecteurs semi-nomades. Ils occupent les parties Sud-Est du Cameroun, dans la forêt équatoriale. Cette dernière est leur mère nourricière car elle leur a donné jusqu'à il y a quelques années tout ce dont ils avaient besoin. Cependant, il se trouve qu'aujourd'hui cette forêt est livrée à une exploitation effrénée, d'où l'épuisement des ressources de la biodiversité ainsi que la destruction de leur culture. Dès lors, ce processus d'épuisement plonge les Baka dans une misère croissante.

Parmi les manifestations de cette misère, on peut citer entre autres la malnutrition, les maladies (ulcères, parasitoses, dermatoses, tuberculose, etc.), le taux de mortalité élevé. Ceci est d'autant vrai que Abéga (1998:15) estime que l'espérance de vie serait de 23 ans. A côté de ceux-ci, prennent place l'oisiveté et les grossesses précoces qui en découlent. Face à cette situation, toute personne à qui il resterait un peu d'humanité ne saurait rester indifférente. Il est vrai que de nombreuses ONG oeuvrent pour leur développement mais beaucoup reste à faire. Ainsi, nous pensons que la meilleure façon de les aider c'est les amener à produire des ressources qu'ils pourront eux-mêmes contrôler et par-là être directement les principaux bénéficiaires. Dans le but de réaliser ce vœu, nous nous proposons d'introduire chez ces derniers la culture des champignons qui, jusqu'à présent, n'est pour eux que le fruit de la cueillette sauvage. Une telle culture leur permettra non seulement de s'occuper, mais d'améliorer la qualité de l'alimentation par l'apport des protéines et de lutter contre la pauvreté par la vente des fruits de récoltes qui permettront d'améliorer les revenus.

La culture des pleurotes (il existe deux espèces de champignon: les termitomyces et les pleurotus) est rapide et intense. La méthode préconisée ici est dite "méthode par plastification de substrat 'pasteurisé'" favorable aux zones où le taux d'humidité varie entre 60 et 95 %. Cette culture se fait en cinq phases.

La première phase consiste au rassemblement des matériaux indispensables pour mener à bien toutes les opérations de culture. Il faut une maison de deux à trois chambres confectionnée à base du matériel local (nattes, piquets, bambous, palmes, etc.) Dans la maison, monter des étagères. Après cela, se procurer:

- la semence qui est un mycélium sur grain ou sur rafles de maïs
- le substrat qui est le support sur lequel pousse le mycélium (semence). Pour l'obtenir, il faut soit des rafles de maïs sèches non moisies, soit du copeaux de bois blanc, soit les nervures de feuilles sèches de bananiers plantains, soit des fanes de soja, soit les résidus de fruits de palmiers à huile. On ajoutera à ce qu'on aura choisi soit de la chaux éteinte uniquement, soit de la chaux et l'urée, soit de la chaux et la farine de maïs, soit les fanes de soja. Pour notre exposé, nous retenons les rafles de maïs enrichies à la chaux et à la farine de maïs.

La deuxième phase consiste en la préparation du substrat. Déposer sur du feu de bois une casserole ou un fût coupé, de 60 litres environ, y verser 20 litres d'eau potable. Mettre en tournant la farine de maïs ainsi que la chaux, mélanger de façon à obtenir une solution homogène, laisser bouillir et y ajouter les rafles de maïs, tourner, fermer la marmite pendant 10 minutes et tourner à nouveau. Dès que l'eau est complètement absorbée par les rafles, descendre la marmite du feu et étaler ces derniers sur un aire de refroidissement bien lavé à l'eau ou à l'eau de chaux.

La troisième phase est celle de l'ensemencement. En effet, le substrat et la semence doivent être emballés dans des papiers en polyéthylène (nylon) bien lavé: à l'aide d'une fourchette aussi bien lavée, déposer dans le papier une couche de semence, y superposer une couche de substrat; répéter l'opération jusqu'à ce que le papier tende à être plein, s'assurer que la dernière couche est celle de la semence. Dès lors, à l'aide d'une ficelle, faire un noeud et perforer le bas du sachet avec une lame de rasoir. Les sacs ainsi formés doivent être accrochés ou disposés sur les étagères dans la champignonnière. Il convient de signaler qu'une chambre doit être réservée à la récolte.

La quatrième phase est réservée à l'incubation. C'est le moment pendant lequel la semence croît, colonise et envahit les rafles préparées (substrat). Lorsque les rafles sont entièrement colonisées, le contenu du sac devient blanc et compact d'où son appellation "gâteau de mycélium". Pendant cette période le mycélium ne doit être ni éclairé, ni arrosé.

À côté de toutes ces phases prend place la cinquième phase qui est la période de récolte. Débarrassés de leurs nœuds, les "gâteaux de mycélium" doivent être entreposés sur les étagères dans la salle de récolte de manière à ne pas se toucher les uns les autres. À l'aide d'une lame de rasoir, perforer de plusieurs trous les sachets, les arroser une à trois fois par jour selon la saison. En moins de 48 heures, les champignons sont prêts pour la cueillette. Ils doivent être arrachés complètement du substrat. Passée cette première récolte, la salle doit être nettoyée, les gâteaux arrosés de nouveau et la luminosité de la salle augmentée. Après deux semaines, les nouveaux fruits font surface ; ainsi, un gâteau peut produire trois à cinq fois sur une période de deux à dix semaines. Les fruits récoltés peuvent être consommés et vendus frais ou séchés.

Référence

Abega, S.C. (1998) *Pygmées Baka: le droit à la différence*, Yaoundé: UCAC, INADES-FORMATION.

Goat rearing

LOVELINE LENAKA

1. What do you need to start goat rearing?

You need to have land, i.e. the grazing land for the goats. You equally need some goats, at least two: a he-goat and a she-goat so that they can be able to procreate. But if you are in a community where goats are scarce, you can buy just a she-goat since it can cohabit with other he-goats in the community.

- A stable is also constructed with bamboos and it is thatched with grass. However, if you have money, you can construct the stable with timber and roof it with zinc.
- The grazing land is fenced with barbed wire or sticks. Bamboos are pecked round the land and stuffed with palm fronds to prevent the goats from straying.

2. Do the goats feed only on grass?

The maid food for goats is grass but you equally give them “*seke*”, i.e. chaff from maize if you are in an area where maize is grown. You also place water in bowls so that they can drink freely.

3. Why do you give salt to goats?

Salt is given to goats to help in digestion and also as a means of enticing them to get used to the owner since the goats see it as a delicacy.

4. What are your daily activities as a goat rearer?

If the goats are in a fence, you go there in the morning to feed them, water them and then you open the fence for them to move out into the grazing land.

- You condition the goats to know that at particular times, e.g. mid day, they have to come to the stable to eat chaff from maize, plantain, and banana peelings, and take their salt and water.

5. In the evening, do you help the goats to move into the stables?

- No, normally when you condition the behavioral pattern of the goats, they already know that in the evening they have to move into the stables and all you need to do is to close and lock the stable door.

If you have just a few goats, in the morning, you remove them and tether them in the grazing land. If you do not have a stable, you need to tie your ropes round their necks and each evening you remove the goats from the grazing land, come and tether them on your veranda.

6. Do you need to assist the goats when they are calving?

Most often you just discover that the goat has calved but if it is having a difficult delivery, you can assist the goat.

During the dry season, when there are no crops in the farms, the goats are released or let loose to move freely and graze.

7. What do you do at this period to bring them back to the stables?

The goats are already conditioned to know that they have to come back to the stables in the evening. You do not need to run after them.

8. What are the difficulties you encounter as a goat-rearer?

The first problem is lack of enough grazing grass during the dry season and that is why you let the goats loose during this period so that they can look for fresh grass. Secondly, when the goats go astray, you have problems with neighboring crop farmers who struggle to water their crops and the stray goats may destroy them.

At times the goats get stolen since they are straying around and can be easily taken by thieves.

Goats are equally attacked by diseases especially around the mouths. At times, they can be infested by ticks. The goat rearer has to take time and remove the ticks.

Fish farming (“pisciculture”)

LOVELINE LENAKA

1. What do you need to start fish farming?

You need a marsh land where you can dig a fish pond. You can equally dig your pond in a land with a high water table. The pond is dug depending on the scale you want to carry your fishing activity on. After digging the pond, you either wait for the water to rise up and get clear or you connect running water into the pond and allow the dirt in it to get settled. When the water in the pond is free of dirt, you put the young species of the fish you want to rear. You need to select the fish that is found in that area, for example, tilapia or mudfish.

2. What do you feed the fish with?

You build a compus at one end of the fish pond, i.e. a grass compus. To build the compus, you make a fence at the corner of the pond. You stuff it with grass and add cow or goat dung to help hasten the decomposition of the grass. When the grass decomposes, earth worms develop in it and those worms serve as food for the fish.

3. Do the fish feed only on these earth worms?

No, you equally feed the fish with chaff from maize “seke” which you throw in the pond. If you have the financial means, you can also give them crayfish.

- The compus is changed from time to time so that it should continue to produce the earth worms.

4. Do you also change the water in the pond?

Yes, the pond is always cropped, i.e. you drain the water, clear the pond of any waste and refill it with fresh water, a new compus, and you put the fish back into the pond. The cropping is done depending on how frequent the pond gets dirty.

5. What are the difficulties you encounter as a fish farmer?

First of all, you are faced with the problem of flooding. Each time flooding occurs, you need to re-crop the pond.

Secondly, birds also come to the pond in order to feed on the fish; so you must always be around to send them away.

6. What do you use to catch the fish out of the pond?

Normally, we use a hook. This is a piece of elephant grass stick with a u-shaped iron at the head. This u-shaped iron is placed on a string with a “*kivengrin*”, i.e., something that is light and can only float on the water. When

the fish gets caught on the hook, the “*kivengrin*” starts shaking or sinking and this helps you realize that the fish is on the hook and you can thus pull it out.

7. How long does the fish stay in the pond before it can be fished out?

This depends upon the type of fish you have in the pond. You just have to use your commonsense here. (Please complete the answer by talking about the different types of fish. Also, ask other questions you feel may be relevant.)

Bee keeping or apiculture

LOVELINE LENA KA

1. What is required prior to start bee-keeping?

You need to build a beehive using bamboo which you tie with a lace made of cane and commonly known as “tie-tie”. You make just one door through which the bees can get in and the other end is completely blocked. There are always two sticks in the middle of the beehive on which the bees perch before excreting the honey.

2. Where do you place the beehive?

You first study the route the bees always follow and then you make sure that the beehive is placed in a cold place. “This can be a tree with leaves that form a shade. Secondly, it should be a place where there is no noise. You cover the end of the beehive with grass so that it should be cold.

Note. You do not need to do anything to attract the bees; so you must put the beehive on the route where the bees always pass or on trees which produce flowers with nectar.

3. How long does it stay before you can start harvesting the honey?

The beehive must stay for at least two years before you can harvest from it; so the farmers always have many beehives at different places.

Since the bees always get right to the innermost part of the beehive before they start hiving, the first two layers you may harvest might have a lot of young bees. But as you go further inside, you will find honey.

4. How is the harvesting done?

You harvest only in the evening so that bees cannot see you. You light a piece of bamboo so that it should produce smoke and flames which help to weaken the strength of the bees. When the beehive is full, the bees remain at the door and when the flame and smoky bamboo is held at the door, most of the bees run away and the rest are weakened. You thus open the door and start removing the honey. The first two or three layers will have many young bees, so you put them aside and go further inside for the honey.

5. What do you use to protect yourself from being stung?

You wear a cap which is pulled right down to your forehead and tie your mouth or the lower part of your face with a piece of cloth.

6. What object do you use to remove the honey from the beehive?

You use a matchet or a knife and you must cut the piece you want to remove on both sides before you send the matchet under to lift it out of the

beehive. The harvested honey is placed in a bucket so that if it drains it will settle inside the container.

If your beehive is already productive you can harvest from it yearly, especially, if you want the harvest to contain enough honey.

Note that if you remove all the honey from the beehive, the bees will never visit it again. So a little amount of honey is always left in the beehive to attract bees.

7. What amount of money do you need to start bee-keeping?

You can start bee-farming in the village without any capital. All you need is to be able to build a beehive and trace the path of the bees where you can plant your beehive.

If you plant enough beehives at different places, you will be able to harvest enough to earn a living from it. One beehive is capable of producing about three tins of honey at each harvest and a tin of honey costs at least 20,000 francs.

"In the face of the growing interest in the use of African Languages by Africans as symbols of personal and cultural identity and as means of empowering the rural communities in the enterprise of national development, the need for a methodologically appropriate manual to guide the teaching and learning of African languages becomes urgent...a timely response, predicated on a policy of the symbiotic use of African languages along with partner (foreign-official) languages, to attain a balanced level of economic and socio-cultural development."

– **Beban Sammy Chumbow**, Professor of Linguistics, University of Yaounde I

Building Capacity promotes the vision that the teaching of African languages can best achieve its aim of boosting the economic and cultural development of the Africans if they are made to work in synergy with a revamping of the course contents of international languages that will be taught within the frame of a development-oriented literacy curriculum. Great emphasis is put on the oral skills in the use of African languages as they are to serve as a link between the community and the school for the ultimate revitalization of the positive aspects of African cultures in a world beset by globalization. The book is supplemented with a sample of texts in the appendix that are meant to be a bridge between formal texts taught in classrooms and literacy texts that can raise the genuine interests of the local populations in that they address their immediate needs. Among the possible topics language teachers are encouraged to explore in their classes are those concerning economic development, but also such issues as health, education, the environment, food security, and conflict resolution.

"Among the numerous proposals in this book is the necessity for Africans, and I would add, for the communities of Asia and Latin America, to re-think the contents of their language courses and assign them an objective which aims at the integral development of their communities."

– **Jean-Pierre Angenot** Professor of Linguistics,
Federal University of Rondônia, Porto Velho, Brazil

Ngessimo Mathe Mutaka is a full professor of linguistics at the University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon. He is the author of an *Introduction to African Linguistics* and other books in linguistics, on AIDS prevention, and of more than forty papers published in recognized journals.



Langaa Research and Publishing
Common Initiative Group
P.O. Box 902 Mankon
Bamenda
North West Province
Cameroon

ISBN 978-9956-558-08-7



9 789956 558087